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ABSTRACT

The papers in these proceedings include a number of themes such as enduring and progressive social change, good practice and positive outcomes, and strategies of survival, resistance and subversion. They are: "Achievement, Personal Development, and Positive Outcomes" (Viv Anderson); "Raising Standards" (Paul Armstrong); "Multicultural Education for Adults" (Burjor Avari); " Four Congratulations and a Caveat" (Roseanne Benn); "Issues in the Supervision of Dissertation Research Conducted by Continuing Education and Training Professionals in South East Asia towards a Masters Degree of the University of Sheffield" (Geoff Chivers); "Continuing Education and the Public Understanding of Science" (Martin Counihan); "Silver Lining" (Eileen Daggett); "Conversing Internationally" (Chris Duke); "A Study of the Competence Levels of the Heads of Adult Education in Turkey" (Ahmet Duman); "Vision, Provision, and Television" (Darrel Dymock); "Women's Studies and Adult Education" (Jane Elliott); "Living with Competence" (Paul Garland); "Where Has Schon Led Us?" (Mary Gobbi); "Using a Self-Selected Support Group as a Strategy for Survival" (Christine Hibbert, Antoinette Middling, Frances Scourfield); "Journey through the Looking Glass" (Cheryl Hunt); "Multiplying Visions and Using Similitudes'" (Christine Jarvis); "Experimental Archaeology in Education" (David Johnston); "We're Still Here" (Rennie Johnston); "Holding Up the Mirror" (William Jones); "Participative Environmental Research and the Role of Continuing Education" (David Knight); "Making a Mark" (Carol Lee-Mak, Janice Malcolm); "The Creative

Management of Biography" (Danny Mashengele); "From Distance Learning to Computer Supported Cooperative Learning" (David McConnell); "Autobiography in an Academic Context" (Margaret Millar et al.); "Exchanging Places, Trading Learning" (Nod Miller, Miriam Zukas); "Fiftysomething" (Penny Muter, Peter Watson); "Happiness Is a Thing Called Subversion" (Kirit Patel); "Vision, Policy, or Accident?" (Keith Percy); "Discourse and Culture" (Julia Preece); "Democracy and Personal Empowerment" (Ian Roffe, Carolyn Inglis); "German Adult Education in East Germany after Unification" (Marion Sporing); "Starting with Self" (Alistair Thomson); "Telling the Story of the Self/Deconstructing the Self of the Story" (Robin Usher); "Two Cheers for Special Needs Provision in Adult Education" (Peter Watson); "Re-Visioning the Self" (Linden West); "Using Vocational Competences To Develop an Alternative Framework for Modern Language Teaching" (John Wilson, A. Ibarz); "NVQs [National Vocational Qualifications] and Individuals" (Jonathan Winterton, Ruth Winterton); and "Coming of Age" (Alexandra Withnall). (YLB)

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Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults

ED 387 657

Vision, Invention, Intervention

Papers from the 25th Annual Conference

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Celebrating Adult Education

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University of Southampton

Winchester
11-13 July 1995

edited by
Ian Bryant

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Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults
(SCUTREA)

Vision, Invention, Intervention

:

CELEBRATING ADULT EDUCATION

Conference Proceedings

edited by
Ian Bryant

Papers from the 25th Annual Conference
University of Southampton, 11-13 July 1995
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The Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults
(SCUTREA)

SCUTREA is a forum for all concerned with research into the education of adults and those involved with the development of adult education as a body of knowledge. It began as an organisation with a membership consisting solely of university departments of adult education. SCUTREA now draws upon a broader constituency and welcomes individual and institutional members from across the international educational field. Adult education is a growing and fast changing sector and at this time SCUTREA provides a focus on the diverse interests of practitioners and researchers. It is a pivotal point in the adult education world in Britain, and is also linked to organisations in both the North and the South, enhancing members' access to international contacts.

The SCUTREA Annual Conference is a major event in the adult education calendar. In addition, smaller workshops, conferences and seminars are organised throughout the year, often jointly with other national organisations promoting the interests of adult and continuing education research and practice. Members' research and teaching interests are linked through working groups which any member is welcome to join.

The dynamism of SCUTREA is reflected in the publications which have been generated from the working groups and conferences and the organisation has moved into an expansive period during the current decade. The organisation produces a quarterly newsletter, *'SCOOP'*, for its members.
Membership is open to individuals and institutions who are accepted by its Council as 'making a contribution to the study of or research into any aspect of learning, education or training in adulthood'.

SCUTREA's Honorary Officers (1993 - 96) are:

Chair: Miriam Zukas, Department of Adult Continuing Education, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT
Secretary: Paul Armstrong, Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, Birkbeck College, University of London, 26 Russell Square, London, WC1B 5DQ
Treasurer: F. John Taylor, 6 Dukes Drive, Leicester, LE2 1TP

1995 Conference Planning Group:

SCUTREA Officers, plus ..

Roseanne Benn (Exeter)
Ian Bryant (Southampton)
Cheryl Hunt (Sheffield)
David Jones (Nottingham)
Athalinda Macintosh (Surrey)
Linden West (Kent)

Editor's Introduction

Ian Bryant, University of Southampton
(Editor and Conference Secretary)

The *Conference Proceedings* for SCUTREA's Silver Anniversary year are the result of a brief submitted to contributors by the Planning Group, inviting adult education colleagues working within higher education to "celebrate achievement, to identify success, and to anticipate potential - but within a critical spirit which recognises the inexorable incorporation of our practice within a broader culture of uncertainty and confusion." The call for papers resulted in a wide-ranging response to a number of themes:

Significant achievements / Enduring and progressive social change. Anderson reports the development of a university certificate in personal and professional skills, within a credit-based framework, as a way of opening up study skills opportunities; Benn reminds us of the achievement of increasing access within a mass higher education system, yet not significantly widening it; Daggett reports on the majority representation of mature students in higher education, compared to standard-age entrants; Duke records reasons for quiet celebration in the contribution of the *International Journal of University Adult Education* to sustaining an international outlook on adult education; Dymock chronicles the development of adult literacy provision in Australia, from 'margin to mainstream'; Elliott shows how the development of Women's Studies has helped in the theorisation of women's experiences and initiated progressive thinking about how knowledge is constituted; Percy documents the growth of continuing education at Lancaster University, noting that this is less the result of a realisation of vision and more the result of volatile structural and cultural circumstances; Roffe and Inglis report the outcomes of New Directions courses which help to realise the under-exploited talents of members; Watson records significant developments in special needs provision for adult learners and the potential that is opened up through the use of new technologies.

Sense of self, personal development and satisfaction. Hunt records how the demise of a county community education service led to a positive re-evaluation of her beliefs and practices as a trainer and academic; Millar, Humphreys and Hargreaves provide a conversational exchange to celebrate the power of writing in adult learning; Thomson gives an account of life history approaches in which sense-making is a prelude to re-shaping learners' lives; Usher questions the reification of 'experience' in adult education through an examination of how we write about 'self'; West celebrates 'a fragmented but also highly malleable subjectivity' through re-writing the self.

Awareness of other cultures and contexts. Avari presents a vision of multicultural adult education to challenge Eurocentric models and reminds us of the cohesive potential of pluralism and diversity; Chivers highlights the importance of attending to cultural context in providing dissertation supervision; Duman reports on the problem of getting the training of adult educators on the political agenda in Turkey; David Johnston reminds us, through a 'problem-solving' approach to archaeological fieldwork, of the differences between ourselves and historically distant cultures; Jones reveals the almost quaint world that SCUTREA inherited, via the pages of *Adult Education*; Lee-Mak and Malcolm raise awareness of the educational needs of Chinese women; Miller and Zukas report on a transatlantic exchange programme between university adult educators, showing how the different 'small worlds' of academe can learn from each other; Preece explores the potential of 'reverse discourses' among groups marginal to formal education; Spöring raises the problems of implementing adult education programmes in former East Germany.

Good practice and positive outcomes. Armstrong argues that we cannot reject competence-based approaches *tout court*, as they raise important questions for the practice of student assessment; Garland reminds us that it's possible to live with the idea of 'competence' if we do not automatically think of it as a controlling behavioural strategy; Gobbi demonstrates how the professional development of nursing has sanctioned the idea of 'reflective practice'; Knight documents the important role of continuing education to the conservation movement; Muter and Watson illustrate how improvements in self-esteem among older learners is possible through participation in a 'Fiftysomething' course; Wilson and Ibarz demonstrate the appropriateness of competence descriptors to the development of modern language syllabi; Winterton and Winterton show how opportunities in relation to the development of NVQs may be realised.

Vision, values and optimism. Counihan sounds a cautiously optimistic note concerning the future of continuing education in contributing to the public understanding of science; Jarvis demonstrates how the use of literature teaching can promote critical thinking; Rennie Johnston, while recognising growing inequalities in the labour market, explores the prospects for a broader 'education for work' linked to a new focus on social justice; McConnell offers a vision of how computer-supported co-operative learning can build on the best principles of community education; Withnall celebrates the process of ageing in her article which offers positive challenges to learning which eventually we'll all have to face.

Strategies of survival, resistance and subversion. Hibbert, Middling and Scourfield remind us that to survive as learners we sometimes need to set exclusions round ourselves, and to protect each other; Mashengele shows how it is possible to create and exchange biography as a means of self-reflection and forging alliances between those who have been written out of the system; Patel documents the formation of a Black Workers Group to press for access to training for part-time Youth and Community workers.

The 38 papers in this collection testify to the success of SCUTREA in extending and protecting the various agendas of adult and continuing educators through research and collegial debate in circumstances which have become increasingly difficult both for individuals and institutions. My own first involvement with SCUTREA was at the half-way point in its life to date, when I presented one of the papers in Nottingham 1982 which were published in the *12th. Annual Conference Proceedings.* I was encouraged by the conviviality of that occasion to 'get involved' with SCUTREA and the personal opportunity now to act as Editor, and for my Department in Southampton to act as host for the '25th.', is especially pleasurable. On milestone occasions such as this, we have reason enough to celebrate the fact that, as Rennie Johnston puts it in the title of his paper, "We're still here".

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Achievement, personal development and positive outcomes: personal and professional skills in H.E.

Viv Anderson, Leeds Metropolitan University

The debate about the nature of continuing education continues. What is it? Where does it happen? Why is it necessary? Is it an important aspect of higher education and, most importantly perhaps, in what ways should it continue to develop?

In this paper I want to do three things: first I want to review continuing education briefly, focusing on some of the changes to which it has had to respond; secondly I want to describe a specific course which has been developed in response to these changes; finally I want to consider some implications for the future direction of continuing education.

Reviewing the meaning and definition of continuing education is not as easy as it might seem. As one leading academic has expressed it ..

"The meaning and definition of Continuing Education is hopelessly confused and varies from university to university" (Wagner, 1995).

The term continuing education has generally been used to include predominantly liberal arts education, particularly that delivered in the older universities where continuing education has been taught in extra-mural departments, and has been seen as something quite separate from mainstream provision. This separation was evident in a number of key differences: continuing education was part-time, non-accredited, and by and large students paid for it themselves.

It has not been static, however, and there has been the development of continuing professional development and continuing vocational education. In addition, the terminology relating to continuing education departments has gradually changed, which, as Duke (1992) noted, reflects "not only rapid change but also instability and lack of confidence: a desire both to value tradition and to be up to date".

The former Polytechnics tended not to have continuing education departments as such, but many had community education departments and sometimes access units. There was an assumption that, in fact, access and continuing education were co-terminus. Wagner argues against this and describes them as "increasingly becoming concentric circles in which the overlap becomes smaller and smaller (op. cit.).

He also suggests that the "neatest" definition of continuing education is the one adopted in the 1984 NAB report, that is "any form of education undertaken after an interval following an end of initial education" (op. cit.). This, he points out, shifts the definition to one taken from the student's perspective, rather than from the institution's. If we do look at continuing education from the students' perspective we can see over recent years a need to respond to an ever increasing need for student confidence, personal development and adaptability; new and varied demands from the work place where employers are seeking a wide range of personal skills from employees; provision of more study support in the face of a more demanding learning environment. Clearly these are challenges faced by all students, but they are likely to have a greater impact on continuing education students than on those who have come straight from other learning environments.

Demographic changes over the last decade have meant that the typical student is no longer the white, middle class 18 year old, straight from school, studying full time on a three year degree. There are now many more "mature" students, many more "non-traditional" students, many more "non-standard entry" students in higher education. As McNair points out "1990 was a milestone for adult learners........In September 1990, for the first time, the majority of entrants to higher education were 'mature'" (McNair 1994). This has major implications for the way in which higher education is delivered, and, indeed for the very nature of higher education.

In addition to these changes within higher education, there have been significant developments in what employers and industrialists are looking for in their employees. In 1989 the CBI described Britain's work force as "under-educated, under-trained and under qualified" (quoted in Ball 1990). It is important for higher education to respond to this if it is to retain its relevance to the world of work. As Ball points out:

> “Yesterday's courses are unlikely to be the most appropriate for tomorrow's world. Industrialists and business people...are particularly concerned with the personal and transferable skills, such as communication, teamwork and leadership, with motivation and attitude” (Ball, 1990).

In addition, with advances in knowledge and new technology, many "specific subject skills rapidly become obsolescent .... while conceptual and personal skills (and positive attitudes) are never redundant" (ibid.).

A further push (or pull) factor is the move towards accreditation for all higher education provision. The recent report of the HEQC CAT Development project (the "Robertson report") has also brought credit accumulation and transfer firmly back onto the higher (and indeed further) education debate. It points out that:

> “increased flexibility of provision, and thus a widening of access and a higher level of student aspiration and achievement has been a major objective of national policy for higher education for years” (HEQC, 1994).

Among its 104 recommendations for ways in which this might be continued and enhanced is the establishment of a single unified credit framework which would be a very positive move for continuing education students, since, as the report points out "Student groups conventionally regarded as benefiting from 'CATS' [Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme] include adult returners, women returners, part time students and continuing education students" (ibid.). Within a growing CATS culture and the facility to gain credit for prior learning from experience, accreditation can also validate learning outside the academic framework. In addition, it also, obviously, enables students to gain qualifications at a time when these are increasingly in demand in the workplace. Ironically, it is also in the workplace that there has been a general failure of work policies and practices to give people the transferable personal skills support, certainly in the past.

These important challenges to the way continuing education is delivered, the way it relates to other mainstream provision and the transformation of the student body in terms of age, experience, learning skills and objectives present those of us directly involved in the sector with an exciting agenda. Some positive responses have been made and new directions are being pursued in education. In the second part of this paper I want to focus on one example.

The University Certificate in Personal and Professional Skills at Leeds Metropolitan University was first offered in 1991/92. The underlying philosophy of the Certificate is to enable all those who study on it, whether they study on half a module or the equivalent of five full modules, to become confident, self-directed people, who can take responsibility for their learning and motivate themselves in terms of their study, their work, and other activities. It is intended to provide a framework which allows people to develop their abilities as independent learners, and thereby generate self esteem and the skills required for self management and decision making. It was also developed as at least a partial response to demands from employers for a skilled work force.

"The workplace of today and tomorrow requires employees who are resourceful and flexible and who can adapt quickly to changes in the nature of their skills and knowledge. They will need to be able to innovate, recognise and create opportunities, work in a team, take risks and respond to challenges, communicate effectively, and be computer literate" (Employment Dept. Group, 1989).

In line with current thinking on the future of HE the course pays serious attention to core and personal transferable skills which, as Stephen McNair (in his address to the NIACE Conference 1995) points out, are repeatedly being demanded by employers.

The modules on the Certificate fall into three categories, reflecting the rationale for the course. One group consists of modules which are directly related to study - Study Skills and Information Handling (i.e. the use of a library and basic research skills). The second group is related to employment - Managing People, Meetings at Work, the Accreditation of Work Practices, Recruitment and Selection of Personnel. In addition, in conjunction with the RSA, a module on Education and Training Guidance for Adults was developed. The third group consists of modules which are likely to be of use to students on a personal basis, or for study, or in employment. This group includes Personal Skills, Written and Spoken Presentation Skills, Word-processing Skills, the use of Databases and Spreadsheets and a numeracy module incorporating the use of statistical data and an understanding of how to operate simple financial systems.

The opportunity to choose from each group is a deliberate attempt to offer students maximum choice. Typically the people studying on the Certificate are over 21 - indeed the majority of students are in their 30s and 40s. Most of them left school with no or few formal qualifications. They are, indeed, representative of the new student population. For many of them the "higher education experience [has become] more widely prized for its biographical significance as well as for its value within the labour market." (Ainley, 1994). In other words many of the students want to study for personal development purposes, as much as for career development.

Since the Certificate was introduced, 348 students have enrolled on modules. This includes members of staff of the University who were given the opportunity for staff development through the Certificate. There is an evaluation of each module each time it runs, and the results are fed into the University's quality assurance system. In addition, students are routinely asked what their intentions are after completing the Certificate. That students have benefited from the course is undeniable and their motives for studying are wide and varied. Some students want a qualification, and have completed the Certificate and then decided to go no further with their studies. Some have studied one or two modules and no more. Another significant group has used it as a test of the ability to study at this level and have subsequently gone on to study full time. Of this last group, some have chosen to continue their studies at Leeds Metropolitan University; others have gone elsewhere. Their choice of courses has included History and Theory of Art and Design, Peace Studies, Leisure and Consumer Studies, Physiotherapy, European History and several Business Studies degrees.

In addition to this, another group of students use the Certificate as support for their studies. Examples include a part time student at another university who has taken Study Skills and the IT modules and a post graduate student, again at another university who has used the Certificate to increase his confidence in written and spoken English. Many students at Leeds Metropolitan University are on individualised programmes of study and typically enter the university with substantial amounts of credit for prior learning at levels 2 and 3. Several of these have used the Study Skills module to support their studies.

This provision of support is a crucial aspect of the Certificate for the many students entering higher education who have not come straight from school, and therefore, are likely not to be equipped with the study skills they need for successfully coping with higher education. An important question for us for the future is how we can make this available to more of our full time students throughout the University. Another crucial aspect of the Certificate is that it is situated within the Access and Independent Study Office of the University, which also includes CATS. Within this programme area students may develop their own individual programmes of study, selecting modules from those available in the University. The advantage of this for Certificate students is that they may take the credit they have gained on the Certificate and put it towards a diploma or degree award of the University.

This brings me to the third and final section of this paper, back, full circle, to some of the broad issues and recent changes affecting continuing education I referred to previously. If we accept the earlier definition of continuing education cited above, then perhaps Wagner is correct, and the majority of the provision at Leeds Metropolitan University and presumably many others, is indeed "CE". In this sense the term has very little significant intrinsic meaning. If we look at it slightly differently, we can see it as the means whereby, in higher education, barriers can be broken down and access can become more freely available.

I believe that we need to move away from the limited idea of Access with a capital A. For some students access courses which lead into full time, three year degrees, starting at day one, level one, will continue to be appropriate. For others they are an unnecessary hurdle and potential barrier. These students will require something different. They want access (with a small a!) which, because of their prior learning (whether certificated or experiential), may be part way into level one, or at other levels. There are students who, as some of those described above, may wish to "taste" higher education before making any decisions. All of these students should have the flexibility to study at their own pace. This may involve intensive study in one academic year, followed by a break. Accreditation of provision is

essential for these students so that they may "bank" their credit points.
Study skills support, probably also accredited and perhaps at different levels, will need to be on the agenda. Continuing education students are very likely to need this to enable them to get the most out of their educational experience. Study skills

“programmes are popular with students - at least in North American universities - [which] shows, if nothing else, how many of the demands placed upon students in the instructional situation are never made explicit in classes, thus forcing learners to seek the relevant information from outside sources” (Knapper & Cropley, 1991).

In addition to these students who perhaps fall into the category of "returners" are those who already have higher education qualifications. Their "continuing education" may very well be some kind of skill based course, providing an additional qualification, albeit at a lower level.
It should also be, for those who want it, for fun and for the personal satisfaction which comes from mastering an unknown, perhaps previously undreamed of achievement.
The model for future continuing education then, is that it has to be flexible in terms of where it is delivered, and when. It should be credit rated, with clear mechanisms for APL and APEL since accrediting other learning recognises the value of other contributors to the continuing education process. It should facilitate and support access to higher education at the level appropriate to the individual student. It should include personal skills, transferable to employment, to study, or just for "life".

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Raising standards: A creative look at competence and assessment and implications for mainstreaming in university adult education

Paul Armstrong, Birkbeck College

From critique to creativity

The critique of a competence-based approach to education and training has been well rehearsed not only in Britain but elsewhere in the world. And it is hard to resist. Recent conference papers and publications have systematically sought to undermine the approach (1). Hyland (2) told us at last year's SCUTREA conference that competence-based education is

"seriously flawed and ill-equipped to deal with education and training beyond the level of basic skills and, moreover, (is) largely irrelevant to teaching and learning in adult education contexts."

And is a

"narrow technicist approach to education which defines useful knowledge in the light of bureaucratic and corporate needs."

This critique has been sustained, particularly in higher education. Recent publications by Barnett (3), and again by Hyland (4) put together a substantial attack on the idea of a competence-based approach to teaching and learning. From a broadly liberal humanistic perspective, Hyland believes that the whole basis of the new system is so flawed that its influence on training and education for future generations will not only be inappropriate but actively damaging. He asserts that the competence-based system combines a highly instrumental philosophy with a narrow and uncritical behaviourist psychology, to produce a mechanistic individualism combined with neglect of learning, knowledge and understanding, so that the new qualifications are intrinsically unreliable as indicators of all but the most elementary skills and abilities.
In summary, previous critiques of see competence-based approaches as:

- * reductionist
- * behaviourist
- * static
- * atomistic
- * based on a never-ending specification
- * too detailed and burdensome
- * based on assessment regimes too complex and costly

A very comprehensive demolition job. Yet, I am still not convinced that the approach has absolutely nothing to offer, and is in fact so potentially damaging. The critique has not succeeded in undermining or subverting competence-based learning in the United Kingdom. This may be due to the fact that the critique has come from without and has mostly stopped short of suggesting alternatives or even strategies for resistance or subversion, often neglecting to recognise that those forms of assessment which existed prior to the development of a competence-based approach were equally subject to accusations of subjectivity, unreliability and invalidity. Hyland does at least go on to propose a large-scale alternative in the form of a broad, coherent curriculum for all 14-19 year olds, which might include a programme of vocational preparation for all. However, this in itself does not inevitably imply an alternative approach; nor does it propose an alternative for adults learning.

The sustained critique is that competence is based on behaviourism, and implicitly this provides the starting and often end point of the critique. I would not wish to challenge the fact that both 'in its design and implementation', competence 'is based on and informed by behaviourist learning theory'. Although we might not value or subscribe to behaviourist theories and their implicit ideologies, we have to accept that they have been and continue to be valid theoretical perspectives within the scientific discipline of psychology. That we do not believe in the theories is one thing; to argue that competence is damaging and destructive because it has behaviourist connotations is quite another matter.

It is not my intention to defend behaviourism. However, the critique has taken on board the fact that competence no longer is confined to the behavioural, since the discourse has brought knowledge back in, and more recently values and their relationship to learning have been investigated in quite a rigorous way (5). The closed mind approach can still dismiss all this as pure behaviourism.

The (over) reaction to the competence-based approach is due to the fact that it is seen as a threat to professionalism. This is a current debate that appears to polarise the two aspects of professional competence (6). The notion of professional competence has returned the issue back to the forefront of intellectual debate. Is it merely a matter of taking sides? Do we have to decide between a competence-based approach for 'lower' level craft and technician skills training or learning or that of the reflective practice for professional education and development? In looking at initial training for teachers of adults, Last and Chown (7) report on the Further Education Unit's attempt to produce a competence-based qualification framework for the sector. According to Jarvis,

"While they are not very happy with the approach, they report that they are currently preparing their own curriculum for the training of adult educators that is much more oriented to the current competence based approach. They suggest that it is in accord with some of the best practices in adult education, such as reflective learning, in a manner espoused by Schon" (8).

Certainly, the introduction of a competence-based approach in the United Kingdom is no historical accident, and it is supported by the political ideology of the new right. But just being critical of it will not make it go away, and even if it does, is what we will be left with necessarily that so much better? We could take an oppositional stance which paradoxically ends up as a more traditional, conservative position than those on the 'radical right'.

I need to substantiate this, and to show how a more creative, less critical perspective on competence-based learning, can assist us to take a progressive view, rather than retreating back to the old liberal humanism. I shall focus here only on the issue of assessment.

Mainstreaming assessment

Those that would wish to be critical of new forms of assessment appeal to tradition. New forms of assessment do not show any advantages over traditional methods, and that they lack reliability and validity. I could not defend competence-based assessment on the grounds that it is any more valid or reliable than what previously existed. However, the ferocity of the attack on competence-based assessment would convince us that it was replacing a tradition that is undoubtedly better. We all know the difficulties of keeping subjectivity out of assessment of course work and essays, and we would be foolish to attempt to defend the tradition on academic grounds. I do not intend to spend too long labouring the point about the problems of reliability in marking assignments and examinations. The shift from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced assessment has been fairly recent in higher education, and is itself indicative of the lack of objectivity in the process. A Further Education Unit report draws our attention to:

"The purpose behind criterion-referenced assessment has been to underpin the validity and reliability of assessment. With clearly stated criteria on which to base judgements, the process of assessment has been said to be transparent, ensuring reliability. However, practitioners have experienced difficulty in interpreting criteria and agreeing on what is valid and sufficient evidence" (9).

Nevertheless, criterion-referenced forms of assessment seem to offer a higher degree of reliability. Whatever the advantages of, say, formal examinations in terms of reliability, they fall down on the issue of validity - the results tell us only how competent a student is at doing examinations. Similarly with course work, project work and other conventional modes of assessment. In an accredited programme that I am responsible for, leading to an academic qualification in quality management, I have to ensure that the students not only demonstrate that they are competent quality managers in the workplace, but that they are competent students if they are to gain the accreditation.

Take a classic contradiction: I used to contribute to a postgraduate course on teaching, learning and assessment in adult and continuing education. Naturally, we would review ways of assessing our students. Then, at the end of the course they would have an examination in which they would be asked to evaluate the examination as a reliable and valid method of assessment. Invariably, most students would recognise the fundamental issues inherent in the examination system, but not once in the eight years I asked the question, did any of the students demonstrate a belief in the critique they were presenting by walking out of the examination room. What was important to the students was not the learning, or its underlying values and principles for practice, but the understandable need to pass the examination and get the qualification.

The issue is compounded by a further aspect. We all know that in higher education, identifying who set and who is to mark the examination is vital information in demonstrating what we know. Again, an example from experience. Another postgraduate programme I contributed to covered the history and ideology of adult education. The three parts of the programme were taught by two adult educators, who in many ways had quite distinct ideologies. To be fair to the students in the examination, the paper was divided into two parts, and students were required to answer at least one question from each section. The only person who saw the answers to all three questions was the programme's external examiner. At the examiners' meeting he asked us what kinds of students were we producing, that they were supportive of the WEA in question 1, but critical of it in question 4?

Competence-based assessment has drawn our attention to an important dimension of assessment practice - its relevance for the student. Typically, forms of assessment we use are only relevant for the student in terms of demonstrating their competence as students. Competence, being largely work-based, introduces us to the idea that assessment can be made to be relevant, and to be based on 'real' and lived experience, whether in the workplace, or through hobbies, leisure activities, familial roles, and so on. Of course, there are a whole host of issues to consider, and we can be critical of the idea if only because using such relevant forms of assessment, may mean that some people who demonstrate their competence, are merely demonstrating their competence at recording appropriate evidence of their competence, in the form of a portfolio. This is quite possible, but it is preferable to investigate this possibility rather than reject it out of hand because it must be based on so-called behaviourism and by implication has to be reductionist.

The issue of relevance leads into a consideration of values and, indeed, the purpose of education itself. Liberal ideologies would have us believe that the role of the adult educator falls short of attempting to change attitudes of students. They would merely provide an opportunity to review a range of views and perspectives, and it would be left to the students themselves to reach their own conclusions, reaffirming or realigning their values and attitudes (10). Attitudes and values are most resistant to change; feelings and action are somewhat easier (11). The radical right have no qualms about changing values, and we all recognise how that has happened, in the new or appropriated language we use, the changing organisations we work in or for, our relationship with students (customers? clients?), funding arrangements, accountability and outcomes.

This brings me to the final point. There are two dimensions of a competence-based approach to learning and assessment that have not been thoroughly explored as part of the rehearsed critique. They are: (a) the reaction against time-serving; and (b) the separation of learning and assessment. Time-serving is an interesting phenomenon, being the basis of the old apprenticeship system that was one of the scapegoats for the failure of British industry over the past century. Certainly, there was much wrong with the old apprenticeship schemes, particularly in terms of equal opportunity issues. National Vocational Qualifications in Britain have separated off the delivery of learning from its assessment. There are no requirements for how learning takes place, only its assessment. In theory this means that people can take as much time as they need to learn and develop, being more flexible and negotiable, and therefore more likely to deliver equal opportunities. But in practice it does not work that way - employers are not happy about an open-ended commitment to training and assessment; education and training organisations, however flexible they have become, have difficulties in managing the implementation of individual learning action plans; and there would appear to be a contradiction insofar as the parallel development of accrediting prior learning has time limits imposed on it. These issues are beginning to be recognised, and the door is open to re-examine the relationship between learning, experience and time.

Similarly, with the separation of learning and assessment, supposedly a radical departure from traditional provision. Not so. Consider those nationally set and assessed examination systems like GCE A Levels in Britain. Most A Level teachers will feel that the assessment is as much of their teaching as the students' understanding. An argument could be proposed for those who believe that mainstreaming is creating a large amount of work for tutors, whether full or part-time, that assessment, particularly using set criteria, is a job for the professional assessor, in the same way that NVQs are assessed by supposedly competent assessors.

A counter-argument might promote the idea that learning is an integrated activity, and to separate out assessment makes its relationship to accountability obvious. But then is accountability a 'bad' thing? Even before the advent of quality assurance in higher education, many adult educators and other lecturers wanted to know that they were achieving their purposes, and raising standards. Feedback from students, often in the form of written or documented evidence, was a natural part of the process. The issue of getting students to do assessed work in extra-mural programmes is by no means a new challenge to extra-mural tutors. Again, what competence-based assessment has done is to raise, but not resolve, the issues. To reject those issues as behavioural would be a blinkered reaction, for what the debate offers is a creative potential for opening up and exploring issues that might otherwise remain contradictions that teachers of adults, operating within the liberal tradition, would be tempted to avoid rather than confront.

From here to there

This paper has attempted to provide an argument and some limited evidence to suggest that new standards and criteria, and new forms of assessment go beyond the myths and misconceptions commonly portrayed in the myopic critique of what is believed to be an idea of the new right, and therefore to be discarded without further critical or creative consideration. If we have learned anything from the past 25 years, it is that we must engage with and transform from within, to confront not avoid those paradoxes and contradictions that are inherent not only in the system, but in our own practice, or - as we used to say before the new right ideology changed our values and attitudes and took away our purpose - praxis.

Notes

1. This includes my own critical contributions, including 'Learning to be competent: contradictions in government youth training schemes' in Miriam Zukas (ed.), *Papers from the Nineteenth Annual Conference of SCUTREA*, University of Leeds, 1989; and 'Teaching to be competent: a re-examination of the critique of competence-based approach to education and training' in Nod Miller and Linden West (eds.), *Changing Cultures and Adult Learning: Papers from the 22nd Annual Conference of SCUTREA*, University of Kent, 1992.

2. Terry Hyland, 'Teaching, learning and NVQs: challenging behaviourism and competence in adult education theory and practice', in Paul Armstrong, Barry Bright and Miriam Zukas (eds.), *Reflecting on Changing Practices, Contexts and Identities: Papers from the 24th Annual Conference of SCUTREA*, University of Hull, 1994.

3. Ronald Barnett, *The Limits of Competence: Knowledge, Higher Education and Society*, Open University Press, 1994.

4. Terry Hyland, *Competence, Education and NVQs: Dissenting Perspectives,* (Cassell, 1994).

5. See, for example, the work of Michael Eraut, *Assessing Competence in the Professions*, Employment Department, Research and Development Series Report No. 14, May 1993; and 'Initial teacher training and the NCVQ model' in J. W. Burke (ed.), *Competency-based Education and Training*, Falmer 1989.

6. In addition to Eraut, op. cit., see Peter Jarvis, *Adult and Continuing Education: Theory and Practice,* Routledge, 2nd. ed. 1995; pp. 183 ff; C.A.Madden and V.A.Mitchell, *Professions, Standards and Competence: A Survey of Continuing Education for the Professions*, Department of Continuing Education, University of Bristol, 1993; Geoff Carroll, *Profession Development: Challenge and Change*, Local Government Management Board, 1993.

7. J. Last and A. Chown. (1993). 'Teacher training in adult education' *Adults Learning*, 4 (9), 234-6.

8. Peter Jarvis, op. cit., 179-180.

9. Further Education Unit, *Examining Assessment: Assessment Issues and Regimes in Post-16 Education and Training,* Further Education Unit, 1994: 6; The FEU also published Alison Wolf's *Assessment Issues and Problems in a Criterion-based System,* Further Education Unit, 1993.

10. A classic statement of this perspective is offered by R.W.K. Paterson in *Values, Education and the Adult,* Routledge, 1979; see also K.H. Lawson, *Philosophical Concepts and Values in Adult Education,* Open University Press, revised edition, 1979.

11. Paul Armstrong (1994). 'Valuing change and changing values: is there a case for a code of practice in university teaching and research of the education of adults' in Paul Armstrong, Barry Bright and Miriam Zukas (eds.), *Reflecting on Changing Practices, Contexts and Identities: Conference Proceedings*, SCUTREA, Leeds, 2.

Multicultural education for adults: rationale, curriculum and process

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Multicultural education for adults belongs to the family of ideas and practices associated with liberal adult education. The social and curricular context of this education is provided by the ethnic, religious and cultural plurality of not only the British society but of societies all over the globe (Lynch, 1989). The purpose of this paper is to highlight some issues in the provision of multicultural education, in the higher education sector, for those who are primarily interested "in the subject and for personal and social development, rather than for vocational objectives" (HEFCE, 1995: 3).

In contrast to both the schools and the further education sector, where, during the 1980s particularly, owing to pressures towards the racialisation of education caused by both the dynamics of the multiracial classrooms and the anti-racist lobby within the town halls (ILEA, 1983; Troyna, 1992), some progress in the promotion of multicultural education was noticed, there have been correspondingly few such initiatives in higher education. On occasions courses in race relations or world faiths are mounted by departments of Continuing Education or Extra Mural Studies. (eg University of Manchester, 1995). They are not, however, an adequate substitute for a systematic policy and sustained delivery of adult multicultural education.

Three reasons may account for the lack of progress. Firstly, since the 1970s, there has been a steady marginalisation of adult education, owing to the blinkered perception of it being a luxury rather than a necessity (Rogers, 1992: 40-44). Secondly, under the influence of the New Right economic theories, the Conservative governments have been niggardly in the financing of adult education. Manchester, for example, had one of the finest colleges of adult education, which served so many peoples' varied educational needs. The city council closed it down essentially to save money (Manchester Education Committee, 1987).

The third reason is more specific to multicultural education generally within the higher education sector. It is concerned with a pattern of intellectual racism within the institutions. This is mostly caused by Eurocentrism, in the way that knowledge has been perceived, produced and propagated by scholars and academics (Joseph et al, 1990). Eurocentrism locates the source and subsequent development of all worthwhile knowledge in the historical and geographical space of Europe and her cultural dependencies and, both consciously and unconsciously, denigrates the knowledge of the "others" (Said, 1994: 43-44; 47-48; 119-120; 359-360). Eurocentrist academics are reluctant to offer space to those who see things from an alternative intellectual perspective (Gordon, 1992). This intellectual racism manifests itself in institutional racism, when those who wish to teach non-eurocentric studies are marginalised by the lack of employment opportunities. Institutional racism denies even the existence of "others" in the way the institution is ordered and arranged.

The intellectual case for adult multicultural education, however, rests upon certain clear needs of our society. A mature and humane democracy depends for its survival upon the over-all wisdom and common sense of its citizens. While there may be little to choose between the individual behaviour of one citizen in State A and of another in State B, the crucial difference arises when citizens think and behave as groups. In plural societies education markedly influences the behaviour of citizens as groups. Investment in education for pluralism and diversity is critical if citizens have to feel a sense of togetherness rather than alienation (Watson, 1992; King, 1992). A state or a society that has neglected this dimension of education will, sooner or later, begin to lose its cohesion. Multicultural Education is a more superior social glue than ideology or a centralised military force.

In Britain the political culture has been shaped by two grand traditions : one is rooted in the long cherished native genius for compromise, tolerance, free expression and dissent (Bryant, 1953: 11-26); the other tradition, that of an aggressive individualism, however, gave rise to the imperial and colonial system, racism and a pillaging global capitalism (Fryer, 1984). This unique British dualism may have worked during the high noon of the Victorian era, when society at home was governed according to one set of political principles while the Empire was governed according to another. Even then there were people who commented on the essential contradiction (Masani, 1939: 96-97). The contradiction became fully exposed in the Empire during the first seven decades of the 20th century, the period of intense anti-colonial and anti-imperial resistance. At home, however, ordinary people still clung to well worn stereotypes and images of "others" (Gilman, 1987), long after the arrival and settlement of many people from the Empire after 1945. Eventually, in a changing multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-faith Britain, the need then arose not only for a new transparency on the part of the government but for a new perception among the mass of the people. It was in order to help to promote this that multicultural education became necessary.

In plural Britain adults require multicultural education for certain intellectual and emotional needs. Firstly, they need the relevant understanding of the political and economic forces underlying the pluralism (Skellington & Morris, 1992). Secondly, they need further social and cultural knowledge about communities, beyond what they learn from the home, the media and the school. Without this knowledge they are unable to have true empathy with a segment of their fellow citizens, and they may act ignorantly (Neuberger, 1987: 1-6; 55-56). Thirdly, adults need to reflect upon their identity, to show respect for the identity of others and to learn to find some common ground on which both their public and private identities can rest in harmony (Modood, 1992). This means that adults need to understand the past better and, if necessary, to learn to confront their history (Preisewerk & Perrot, 1978).

A multicultural curriculum for adults in Britain, in the framework of higher education, will ideally consist of two core areas. The first has to deal with the historical, political and economic dimensions of the multicultural society in Britain and its links with the global society. The story of the rise of imperial Britain, through the era of mercantilism and the Slave Trade, and through the wars of the 18th, 19th and the early 20th centuries, will form an introductory theme (Fryer, 1984). This needs to be linked with an understanding of the present day global political and economic inequalities. The rise of racism and its defining features, the pseudo-scientific classifications for the human "races" (Fyfe, 1994) and the distinctions and overlaps between such terms as "race" and "ethnic" are other useful subjects for study. Also to be included should be education into identifying and understanding the strategies for tackling discrimination, in fields as wide ranging as the labour market, health and housing, the police and the legal profession, the education system and party politics (Braham et al, 1992). The style and method of providing this education has to be reflective, analytical and academic; angry, passionate and experiential narratives should also have a place, but a limited one, in a higher education curriculum (Avari, 1994: 307-310).

The other core area is cultural education. This may be approached in two ways. Firstly, through the theme of the global cultural heritage. This is essentially about the history of ideas (Abu-Lughod, 1993; Asante & Asante, 1990; Joseph, 1991; Nasr, 1968). Our modern heritage of knowledge in fields as diverse as science, mathematics and astronomy, medicine and pharmacology, literature and arts, music, dance and aesthetics, or the religious and spiritual lore is truly international. Eurocentrism refuses to acknowledge this intellectual debt (Avari & Joseph, 1987). Through multicultural adult education, on the other hand, a greater awareness and curiosity may be aroused. Secondly, cultural education can be promoted through education in discrete areas of cultural knowledge. In the British context, these areas may relate to minority ethnic or faith communities. A particular model, pioneered at the Manchester Metropolitan University, is based on the provision of an annual series of lectures in the cultures of such communities. In Manchester's case the relevant groups identified have been African (including diaspora Africans), Indian, Islamic, Eastern Christian and Chinese. The study of their cultures leads to an examination of their underlying value systems, ethics and rituals (Hulmes, 1989). In each case there is also an opportunity to study both the adaptability of the culture in a Western, urban environment and the contributions it makes to the composite, multicultural life style that is being noticed in that environment. At the same time, examples of the contradictions, conflicts and controversies within each of these cultures have to be studied. Thus, for example, an Indian Studies course would need to include the study of the nature of the conflict between the Hindu and the Muslim perceptions of seven centuries of Muslim dominance in India (Engineer, 1994; Searle-Chatterjee, 1990). An African Studies course might want to touch upon the substantial differences that exist between the Eurocentrists and the Afrocentrists over the meaning and importance of the history of ancient Egypt (Bernal, 1987: 433-437). The uniquely difficult task of reconciling the faith vision of those who see Islam functioning outside history with the tentative, non-judgmental approach of an academic discourse may need to be addressed in the construction of a pedagogy of Islamic Studies (Manchester Metropolitan University, 1994). And so on. One purpose of cultural education is to help the student to make sense of her/his identity and to learn to respect that of others.

Given that there is both a rationale and a curriculum for multicultural adult education in higher education, how do we ensure its successful delivery? To answer this question, we need to take into account three processes at work. The first concerns the institution. Its department of continuing education needs to have a coherent policy for the programme, a policy that actively encourages the dissemination of knowledge for the public good. This policy can only be arrived at through a dialogue between the interested staff and the interested members of public, and endorsed by both the academic and the governing councils of the institution. Care needs to be taken, however, that the dialogue does not descend into polemic or rhetoric. There should be a balance between the vocational and the non-vocational courses. The department needs to prioritise and earmark adequate mainstream funds to operate the non-vocational programme successfully. Finally, the institution would need to appoint a senior person to lead the programme.

The second process concerns the community or, more particularly, the minority ethnic or faith community. Within each such community there is great interest and enthusiasm for both learning and teaching about the community. Many young people, re-discovering themselves after a British upbringing, groping for their roots and curious for further understanding, are in search of multicultural adult education. Some knowledgeable members of a minority community might be profitably employed at least as part time tutors. The more affluent members might be encouraged to make charitable grants to institutions, thereby helping the latter to initiate systematic studies of their cultures (Avari, 1994: 317-319).

The third and the final process takes place in the classroom. That is where the greatest challenges lie. The tutor or the lecturer obviously plays a key role, particularly where empathy and sensitivity are concerned. On the other hand, the adults who come to learn need to be both humble and challenging. Humble, in the sense that others may know more about their cultures and they should be prepared to acknowledge that. Based on his experience with multicultural adult classes, the author laments the fact that too many students from the minority ethnic or faith communities assume that a tutor from another ethnic group or faith is incapable of teaching them about the issues concerning their culture. Some go even further, and deny any right to a "white" teacher to expound on or explain "black" culture. That sort of attitude can only hinder the smooth development of multicultural education for adults in this country. At the same time, however, students need to be sufficiently challenging, in order that stereotypes and eurocentric ideas are not unwittingly allowed legitimacy.

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Four congratulations and a caveat

Roseanne Benn, University of Exeter

First, congratulations to SCUTREA on this anniversary. For many adult educators, research can be a lonely and isolated business. The annual Conference provides an enjoyable and stimulating occasion for sharing thoughts, ideas and interests. The second congratulation is to an area of adult education that, though younger than SCUTREA, is fast approaching its Coming of Age. The Access to Higher Education movement was kick-started by a DES Letter of Invitation in 1978. The movement has advanced in its campaign for wider access for adults to higher education and the resultant provision has had outstanding success. So congratulations to Access on both its approaching 18th and for increasing opportunities for non-traditional students to enter higher education. Congratulations also to Access for encouraging the collaborative working by all branches of adult education including universities, further education and community education.

This paper will review the statistics that underpin the success of Access but will note a substantive caveat. A discussion of the social composition of higher education will show that inequalities still exist and reasons for this will be sought. Factors will include government ideology, universities' perception of their role and the paradigms within which adult educators operate.

By the time Access reaches its 18th. birthday, it is probable that funding imperatives will have forced most universities to have withdrawn from Access provision as such. This paper will argue that this is appropriate for reasons other than financial ones. However the forces that operate against equity in higher education must be combated and this paper will argue that University adult education still has a major role to play in widening access and ensuring equity.

The new adult higher education

Traditionally universities (though not polytechnics) fulfilled their role as providers of adult education through their Departments of Continuing Education rather than through their mainstream provision. But times have changed. The eighties and nineties have been a period of rapid change in participation in higher education. Total numbers in the system have increased dramatically. Between 1982/3 and 1992/3, the full time total in higher education rose by 70% to 958,000; the part-time total rose 62% to 486,000 (CVCP, 1994). But these statistics hide an even more interesting development. By 1991/2, a third of all full time entrants and over a half of all full and part time students were over twenty-one (DfE, 1992). By 1992/3 a third of all full-time undergraduates were 21 or over (CVCP, 1994). Although the number of under 21 year old entrants is still increasing and this group still form a majority in the 'old' universities, they are now a minority of students in the system as a whole. We are now in the potentially revolutionary position that more than half of the entrants to the higher education system are mature. Mainstream higher education is now a major provider of education for adults and adults form a substantial constituency of higher education. This surely is an achievement worthy of celebration. But inequalities still exist. Higher education is both part of society and a shaper of it. It is a major location for the creation, criticism and transmission of knowledge and ideas. But knowledge is changing and traditional models of knowledge are under criticism. The right of certain privileged groups to define knowledge is being challenged by culturally, socially or economically excluded groups (NIACE, 1993). However these groups, excluded from the definition of knowledge, are also excluded from access as is shown by an examination of participation in higher education in the context of class, gender and race as well as age. A happy picture emerges for women. In the period 1982/3 to 1992/3, the number of women at university increased by 89% compared to 51% for men and this has increased the participation of women in full-time education from 43% in 1982/3 to 49% in 1992/3 (CVCP, 1994). The analysis is more difficult for class and race but a less positive picture emerges. In modern societies such as Britain, qualifications are used to legitimise inequalities of pay and status and this leads to limitation of access as parents endeavour to pass their own class advantage on through educational opportunities to their own children (Halsey, 1992). Higher education statistics suggest that the move to a mass higher education system has given absolute gains to all groups but that disadvantaged groups are not necessarily relative beneficiaries (Glennister and Low, 1990). Cross-national comparisons of access show that determinants of access still lie partly in cultural, social and economic factors (Halsey, 1992). The dramatic increase in higher education consists of an absolute increase in participation in higher education for all categories with a relative increase in the numbers of women and adults but not in terms of class or race. The new higher education may be adult with women taking a more equal place but there are still inequalities in participation.

The next section of this paper identifies factors which contribute this continuing imbalance: government ideology; the universities' perception of their role; and the dominant paradigms operating on adult education providers.

New Right ideology and higher education

A major force on participation and the shape of the new higher education is government policy. Throughout the educational system, recent changes in funding and in accountability reflect a major shift towards market driven priorities, pragmatic vocationalism and narrow instrumentalism. The New Right thinking about higher education is laid out in the White Papers of 1987 and 1991. In the 1987 White Paper Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge, of the three stated aims and purposes of higher education, two concern the economy and only one concerns research and scholarship (DES, 1987: iv). Access is located in a well trained workforce and defined to mean " taking account of the country's need for highly qualified manpower" (author's emphasis). This thinking is confirmed in the 1991 White Paper Higher Education: a New Framework which reaffirms these aims and purposes of higher education and policies on access and reinforces the manpower role by promising "continuous education from the age of five and throughout working life" (author's emphasis) (DES, 1991: 3). This attitude reflects a desire to make higher education provision and research more relevant and utilitarian. By the imposition of greater external control, particularly in the area of funding, the Thatcherite policies of 1985-91 imposed an expansionist policy and greater accountability, accessibility and vocationalism on the universities, reflecting the Government's commitment to increasing the output of qualified manpower, consumer control and greater social integration (Benn & Fieldhouse, 1993). These were radical changes indeed but directed towards social conformity not social change. These forces put pressure on both higher education and pre-higher education institutions to increase access but not necessarily to widen it.

The culture of higher education institutions

However government policies, powerful though they are, are only one influence on the higher education system. The priorities of higher education institutions are usually expressed in terms of research, teaching, scholarship and the employment needs of the local community and country rather than the social purpose. Universities have not traditionally seen their role as being about social change for various reasons including elitism and perhaps fear of political involvement. There is a real concern that universities' acceptance of adult students is a transitory phenomenon linked to demographic factors rather then a genuine commitment to wider access and increased equity.

But equity is not concerned solely with access to the institution but also with the student experience whilst at university. It is questionable to what degree higher education has been or will be prepared to adapt to provide a more appropriate learning experience for adults. An illustration of this arises from Mezirow's work with women returners (1981). He identified perspective transformation as the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho- cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationship, reconstituting this structure to permit a more discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings. For many adults in higher education, the process of obtaining a place in higher education through routes such as Access has already encouraged a perspective transformation. Many have come, or come to the edge of, recognition of their culturally-induced dependency roles and relationship and the reasons for these and have taken action to overcome them. It is arguable that the higher education experience is a reversion back to dependency on the expert, the body of knowledge and the continued transmission of society's culture and norms.

Forces operating on adult educators

Any discussion on the participation of adults in higher education needs to examine the forces operating on the providers of feeder or Access courses. On the one hand, there are the forces pressing for a collectivist approach advocating reformist or revolutionary measures. Access has been linked into the emancipatory, radical traditions of the adult education movement from its very beginning. The aim of Access is the truly radical one of widening access to higher education for various groups who have previously been largely excluded and this grows out of the tradition of using adult education as a tool to counter systematically created disadvantage. Access courses were created by practitioners who were often committed to the egalitarian traditions of adult education (Lieven, 1989). But the forces ranged on the side of a conformist role of education are formidable. A major national force is the use of education as a hegenomic instrument. Within this, the government-driven imperatives for a well trained workforce and social conformity sit alongside the desire of powerful groups in society to preserve the status quo. After a decade and half of New Right individualism, this notion of the social purpose of adult education seems to have been replaced by what Thompson calls a 'Benetton-style solution to educational provision' (Thompson, 1993) which is primarily concerned with the notions of 'widening the market'. This, together with the current preoccupation of professional training towards student-centred, self-directed learning, leads to the conclusion that Access is concerned primarily with the self-development of the individual (Griffin, 1983). The educational emphasis is now one which is located in individual development, self-help, student- centeredness and a narrower definition of development largely confined to responding to employment needs (Fieldhouse, 1993). The net result of these forces on adult educators is a tendency to increase access for individuals rather than to systematically widen it to all groups in society.

Having discussed changing composition of higher education and noted the factors that contribute towards continuing inequalities in the system, we will now examine some of the possible future contribution of university adult education to wider access.

University adult education's past contribution to wider access

Adult education has always provided routes through for example GCSE, A level and extra-mural courses for adults who wish to progress onto higher education. Since the 1980s, Access to Higher Education Courses have been developed as a more appropriate purpose-built route. This provision has been instrumental in increasing the number of adults entering higher education, though data collection processes make it impossible to quantify this contribution (Davies, 1994). This success is in part attributable to the genuine collaboration and consequent sharing of good practice between higher education, university adult education, further education and community education. University adult education's contribution to this partnership has included provision, advocacy and active participation in validation.

However, university adult education's role in provision has been steadily reducing from 16 per cent of Kitemarked Access provision in 1989, 7.5 per cent in 1992 to 6 per cent in 1994 (HEQC, 1994). This will probably reduce even more as a result of the recent funding changes. Sad though it is for the many of us who have gained so much personally from hands-on work with Access provision, this gradual withdrawal is appropriate for other than financial reasons. Expertise in teaching and learning at pre- university level lies with further and community education and these institutions have worked hard over recent years to make themselves more accessible to adults in the community. But although university adult education may withdraw from provision, it is still in a unique position to contribute its own particular expertise and resources to the wider access movement.

University adult education's future role in wider access

We have identified some of the factors limiting the success of wider access locating these within government ideology, institutional cultures and forces operating on over-stretched further and community education tutors. In the coming years, the Access movement will need to tackle these factors as well as continue to develop Access provision. In all of these, adult educators in universities have a very real role to play.

The access movement is inhibited from changing government thinking by the lack of rigorous well-grounded research of either a theoretical or empirical nature. University adult educators with their remit for research are in a privileged position to provide the theoretical underpinning and empirical evidence for the wider access case. Their research, scholarship and expertise can also be employed within their own institutions to widen admissions through advocacy, staff development and, most importantly, changing basic structures within higher education.

Involvement of universities through their continuing education departments in the validation of Access provision at local, regional and national level is crucial in the continued credibility of the Access Certificate and in raising the profile of access issues.

A further area in which university adult educators can continue to contribute to wider access is through provision, not of Access courses themselves, but further professional studies for Access tutors and providers. Recent research with a small group of adult educators teaching on Access indicated that adult educators in further and community education recognise a need for appropriate and relevant continuing education if they are to be effective in their Access provision (Benn, 1994). This is an ongoing and crucial role for university adult education.

So again congratulations to both SCUTREA and Access on their respective anniversaries and congratulations to Access on its achievements so far. With the continued involvement of all branches of adult education, perhaps by Access' 25th anniversary we will be celebrating even greater access and equity in our higher education system.

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Issues in the supervision of dissertation research conducted by continuing education and training professionals in South East Asia towards a Masters degree of the University of Sheffield

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Introduction

This paper is based on the experience of tutoring on a Masters/Diploma in Training and Development which is offered by the Division of Adult Continuing Education, of the University of Sheffield in South East Asia. The Diploma programme has been offered largely by means of text-based distance learning materials, supported by intensive seminars held over weekends three times a year, and tutor guidance. There has been regional administrative support located in Singapore, where the seminars are held, but the tutor team is based in the Division of Adult Continuing Education in Sheffield, comprising full-time and part-time staff supporting the large scale UK delivery of the Masters/Diploma in Training and Development. The tutors supporting the Singapore-based delivery of the course travel to Singapore for the intensive seminars in groups of 3 or 4, taking turns to reduce the load of work in this area, and allowing a substantial number of staff to gain experience. The tutors stay in Singapore for 9-10 nights, and as well as preparing for the weekend intensive seminar, carry out student recruitment, guidance and orientation, advice and supervision, marking of assignments, administrative duties, meetings with employers and so on.

To complete the two year part-time course to Masters level, the students must carry out a research study, usually empirically based, in the field of training and development and leading to a dissertation. The students are typically training managers, employed in larger rather than smaller companies, although there are many exceptions. They are most commonly funded by their employers to take the course, and for this reason alone tend to conduct their dissertation research on issues of concern to their employers. In these respects they are rather similar to their UK counterparts. However, there are great dangers in beginning to regard the course members as simply training managers of firms who happen to live in South East Asia, and whose study problems arise simply because of their distance from Sheffield.

While the differences between the students in the UK and in South East Asia cause concern at all stages of their studies, these differences are particularly of concern at the dissertation stage. This paper will attempt to address the concerns at the dissertation stage, their origins, and how we are attempting to address them.

The Singaporean story of social and ethnic diversity and economic success

The majority of our South East Asian students are drawn from Singapore, although a number are based in Malaysia, and a few have jointed the programme from other countries close to Singapore. A focus on the Singaporean students will be sufficient to illustrate the concerns which arise from students diversity. The social and economic circumstances of Singapore are somewhat special, but there are echoes in the surrounding countries, at least in their urban communities.

Singapore was founded as recently as 1819 (Anon, 1994). By 1911 Singapore's population of 250,000 already represented 48 distinct ethnic groups, mainly from China's southern provinces, Indonesia, Malaya and India, speaking 54 languages. From then until today every decade has seen Chinese, Indians, Malays, Indonesians, and people from the rest of Asia flooding into the city-state. Today, Singapore Island holds 2.8 million people and is the regional centre for trade, transport, banking, tourism and communications.

The Chinese, who make up 76% of the population, have come from almost every province of China and are within themselves tremendously diverse. The descendent of the early Chinese immigrants of the last century, referred to as 'Straits Chinese', and subject to British rule for generations, have developed great familiarity with British culture, and something of the aspect of the British lower classes. On the other hand recent Chinese immigrants will speak little English and have little knowledge of (or interest in) British customs.

The Malays are just over 15% of the population and represent the second largest ethnic grouping in Singapore. While the Chinese majority ensures Chinese dominance in Singapore politics, there is great awareness of Malaysia standing right next to the Island, and the extent to which the very survival of Singapore as an independent country is dependent on support from Malaysia (even for its water supply).

Most Malays are strongly religious and their Islamic traditions and values must be well understood by Western tutors.

The Indian community is the third largest ethnic grouping at 6.5% of the population. While this ethnic group is itself highly diversified, there are some commonalities, from the Western viewpoint, including generally a good command of English, and familiarity with British ways. The British rules of Singapore tended to lean on the educated Indian community to help them administer the island. This tradition continues, with the police force and the civil service for example drawing heavily from the Indian community for staff.

Singapore also holds a wide range of other ethnic communities, from Arabic, to Jewish to Armenian, with a thriving indigenous European community and a large group of expatriate professionals from all over the World. Our Singaporean students are drawn from all the above ethnic groupings, including the expatriate British.

Since the departure of British as rulers, Singapore has been governed, democratically, but firmly, by successive leaderships exhibiting a benign authoritarianism. While those seeking a more Western style of democracy, with more tolerance of non-establishment views and grouping, have found it difficult to live under such a regime, there have been many remarkable successes from this approach. Singapore's economic success is well documented, but less attention has been drawn to the lack of overt racism in the country, indeed the evident knowledge, understanding and deep respect which each ethnic group holds for the other.

Despite this awareness and respect for other cultures taught in schools each ethnic group maintains its own traditions. In this sense tradition dies hard and is well evidenced by the highly segregated job market according to ethnicity, especially at levels below the professional ranks.

Overlapping all this diversity has been the British influence, today declining but still strong. In educational terms this is shown by the commitment that all Singaporeans should become strong in English and conversant with English literature. On the other hand, American influences are everywhere in popular culture.

The successive waves of immigrants have seen their way forward as via education and hard work. Under the British opportunities for advanced education and training were limited, but the following governments have strongly encouraged learning across the community at all levels.

The Chinese traditional emphasis on self-help and material success has encouraged long working hours, a competitive spirit in enterprises, and an earnestness around work and study for qualifications. Study for vocational qualifications, especially in the areas of mathematics, science, technology (especially IT) and business studies takes priority. Singapore's great economic success is clearly related to the ever increasing educational achievements of its people. Singapore lives by the wits of its people and competitiveness and quality are terms used over and over again by governmental sources.

Effects of these features on student dissertation research

From personal experiences, discussions with other programme tutors, and with our students themselves, the following concerns can be readily identified:

1. From some students the gaining of the qualification is much more important than the study programme itself. The whole programmes is seen as a race track, with the most successful student being the one who reaches course completion fastest. This view affects their choice of research topic, their plans for empirical work, the amount of reading to be done, and the way in which they relate to their supervisor. Such students need firm guidance if they are to achieve appropriate standards.

2. The course tutors are seen by many students at first as authority figures. Generally this means that they will often want to know what is required of them and are less interested in why it is wanted.

3. Loss of face in public is not acceptable to most of our students, who will often for example state in class that they understand when they do not. As long as the course tutors are seen as authority figures there is also a tendency to tell tutors what they think we want to hear rather than the unvarnished truth, whether about their dissertation progress, our suggestions, what they think of the adequacy or otherwise of our supervision, and so on.

Tutors need to make even greater effort than usual not to 'show up' students, either in class, or by reference to their work in front of third parties. Frankness in communication can only come from trust based on friendship between students and tutors.

4. The hierarchical nature of the workplace in Singapore, and deference to senior management is evident in everyday life in Singapore and comes across strongly in student dissertation studies. This makes students wary of criticising their organisations where this will imply criticism of their superiors, and can cramp their dissertation studies. Tutors must respect this tradition without compromising intellectual values.

5. The emphasis in the Singapore education system and the workplace on qualification and precise measurement limits the thinking of students about what is researchable, and how research should be

conducted. While the importance of qualitative research is strongly emphasised in teaching the course, students are only too ready to propose research into statistical trends, generally backed by the entire workforce.
Suggestions that a particular study of company problems should really include interviews with very senior managers may will be met with incomprehension, on the grounds that the outcome is not quantifiable and that it would be impertinent and inappropriate. Again, sensible compromises must be sought which generate effective outcomes.

6. Students who are not widely travelled and have not experienced much career change are often not well placed to understand tutor views on such matters as equal opportunities and nepotism. It is normal in Singapore for professionals to network intensely and lean hard on family, friends and old colleagues if they are looking for a change of job.

7. The most successful economies of East Asia, led by the Japanese have made great strides by copying the best practices of leading countries and companies elsewhere. To copy the work of others and have it accepted as your own is a skill much admired across Asia. This has implications for our students, from the tendency to plagiarise directly the text of other authors, across to utilising another researcher's research tools and methods without acknowledgement. Tutors must be firm in stressing the need for acknowledgement.

8. The competitiveness of society generally often spills across into students' attitudes towards each other in any course cohort. Far from helping each other at the research stage, some students will keep doggedly to their own work and resent any calls for support from fellow students. Tutors must respect students' views in this case.

9. While most professionals speak good English, those with English as their third language tend to speak a simplified, 'clipped' form, referred to colloquially as 'Singlish'. In written form this becomes unacceptable for dissertation purposes. We require all dissertations to be written in grammatically correct, albeit basic English.

10. Some students find confronting the affective domain difficult during their research studies. For people socialised not to show emotion and not to seek expressions of emotion, except amongst close family and friendship circles, it is clearly difficult to research emotions and emotional change. And yet such concerns often lie right at the heart of the research problem they have chosen to investigate. Tutors must affirm the importance and acceptability of expressing emotion within the course programme.

Further issues for dissertation supervisors

To come to terms with these issues there is a need for inexperienced tutors to undergo formal induction, and all tutors to engage in ongoing dialogue with each other over their concerns. Study of the diversity of Singapore and South East Asian cultures pays dividends in terms of understanding the needs of our students, and demonstrates respect for their achievements and value systems. We need to clarify what differences between our students and ourselves strike at the heart of our immutable academic values and standards, and which are welcome and enriching to the work we do. It is essential that at an early stage we clarify to students why we revile researchers taking credit for the creative endeavours of others. We need to clarify the elaborate research rules set up to ensure this is not done, even by accident. At the same time we must explain that far from it being wrong to co-operate in the learning process with other students, we strongly support this. We need to explain our commitment to equal opportunities, and fairness in support to students, and that far from meaning that every student will be treated the same, we will give extra support to students wherever they encounter problems, whether with difficult superiors or in writing in English.

If we consider the points of concern listed above we can see that most of them will have been encountered by tutors with UK based students, albeit infrequently. Their coping strategies and advice to students should be identified and brought further to the fore with our Asian students.

Above all we need to see our students as individuals and get to know them as well as we can. Only in this way can we resist reacting to difference in appropriate ways. We need to be aware of our own emotions and cultural values in this respect. For example it is much easier to form ties to the students brought up in pro-British homes and schools, typically the Indian and Straits Chinese students, than the students from families of recent immigrants who share nothing of history, religion, folk culture or general beliefs with our tutors.

Here the problems of working at a distance loom large (Phillips, 1985). While we see all students, in groups and individually, on a intensive basis when in Singapore, problems in research can arise at any time and can then only be dealt with by telephone or fax. Very recent developments in video conference and video phones, and the use of E-Mail/Internet to facilitate text and TV picture-voice transmission are of intense interest to us in overcoming barriers to effective communication in research supervision.

At all costs we must strive to keep cultural imperialism at bay (Pancheco, 1992). Not only may the students come to resent us if our advice or requests are seen as inappropriate to the point of uselessness, but their research will be adversely affected and their organisations will become antagonistic too (Mead, 1990). Our effectiveness as tutors will always be limited by the fact that we are at arms length from Singapore society. Some outstanding students have already passed through the programme to Masters level, It is from the ranks of these graduates that we must seek the research supervisors of the future, professionals who can empathise fully with fellow Asians, but can carry forward and cascade the values and expertise which give our programme worth. We have much to learn from each other's cultures and the field of continuing education and training provides an outstanding forum for this learning.

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Continuing education and the public understanding of science

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Education to promote the public understanding of science has a long history. In England it goes back to the 17th century, or further back according to one's definitions. The history demonstrates that science has had various ideological and social purposes, and that the activity of scientific communication has had various loci within society and fluctuating support. It shows, as history usually does, that there is nothing inevitable or sacrosanct about the present-day state of affairs. The "traditional" position of scientific public education within British society, i.e. the position maintained until now through the "old" university sector - may prove to have been as ephemeral as the 19th-century Mechanics' Institutes and rather less influential.

It was pointed out in 1994 that

> "... university adult education is under severe stress for a variety of reasons .... There is a real danger that departments of adult/continuing education will not, in the future, be able to sustain multidisciplinary staffs including scientists. If scientific adult education devolves to being no more than a spare-time activity of staff whose normal work is focused elsewhere, or if its centre of gravity shifts to other institutions - perhaps to the Open University or to the electronic media - then its character will change profoundly" (1).

The main purpose of the present paper is to look more closely at the current transition, not least because there has been rapid change even since mid-1994. It will be emphasised that future developments are in danger of being subverted by two serious misunderstandings about the public understanding of science which have recently become prevalent. One is a confusion between public education and young people's education, and the other is a failure among many policy-makers to recognise that the resources applied to scientific public education are likely to decline sharply (2).

For those unfamiliar with the debate it should be pointed out that "science" in this context applies primarily to the fundamental natural sciences driven by ideals to do with the intrinsic value of scientific knowledge, the "meaning of life", and the idea that the appreciation of science and of the natural world are a universal birthright. The applied sciences, benefitting from direct economic justification, do not lack support from governmental and commercial institutions and are not vulnerable in the same way as the fundamental sciences.

Those involved in public education or continuing education in Britain are familiar with the "accreditation" process, now well under way, initiated by the Higher Education Funding Councils. The great bulk of funded public education, mainly old-university-based, will henceforth take the form of credit-bearing courses incorporated into the general system of course provision for part-time students. This will not be without its advantages, particularly for courses of a professional, vocational, or skill-based kind, but it will be appropriate only for a few of the activities intended to support the public understanding of science. Structured courses leading to qualifications - for example, the flush of new postgraduate courses being launched on science communication - will continue to be eligible for HEFCE support; but open informal courses for the public themselves will largely cease to be supported by "hard" money and are likely to evaporate, especially in the present atmosphere of financial stringency across higher education.

However, there has been at the same time an efflorescence of new initiatives aimed at supporting the public understanding of science and promoted most prominently by Committee on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS), the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and more recently by the scientific Research Councils. In one sense these new initiatives have been, and may continue to be, successful: they have led to many new activities involving a host of organisations of all kinds (including some of the "new" universities), and have attracted much media attention. However, there is another side to this coin. The activities associated with COPUS have involved "soft" money, voluntary work depending on scientists' goodwill, and the uncosted or marginally-costed use of existing resources. Moreover, the associated publicity has had the side-effect of drawing attention away from the threat to mainstream public education work on science. The promoters of new initiatives seem to have believed their own propaganda, and the impression has been given that the movement for the public understanding of science is well-supported and successful. In fact, considered as a whole, it is not successful, because the expansion in COPUS-related work has nowhere near compensated for the decline faced by mainstream public education in science. The facts and figures have been slow to emerge, but some have recently been presented in an open letter to the Wolfendale Committee (3). Although optimism and "hype" are appropriate and necessary when advertising public events, and although the Research Councils' interest in public understanding is extremely welcome, complacency is not justified.

There is a further negative factor to which attention should be drawn. A high proportion of the recent initiatives in the public understanding of science are aimed at young people, including those studying in schools and colleges. For example, in the current PPARC scheme8, "some preference will be given to projects involving schools and young people". To that extent, the public understanding of science is supported only in a rather indirect way. Although such schemes may be very valuable in encouraging young people towards science in their further and higher education, they have only a tangential and long-term effect on the understanding of science by the general public. The overall effect may be that most of the new funding helps to patch up deficiencies in the pre-university sector of education rather than supporting the continuing education sector.

These observations should not be misunderstood as a plea for more resources from COPUS, or for a reversal of HEFC policy. To be realistic, there is no prospect that the Funding Councils will revert to the kind of earmarking that protected public education in the past, or that the movement towards credit-based funding will be stopped. The movement for the public understanding of science, within the "old" universities in Britain, is in meltdown; it will only survive insofar as it can recreate itself.

The way forward is not clear, and it is not the purpose of this paper to make a specific proposal for future action. However, a few very tentative suggestions can be made towards a new framework for open public education in fundamental science. A European perspective is necessary, and it must be recognised that leading-edge science today relies on a limited number of scientists who are not scattered across the whole university system but are concentrated in a small (and probably contracting) number of centres of excellence. It would be appropriate for the Research Councils in the Britain, their equivalents elsewhere, European institutions such as CERN, and the EU itself to play a much greater part in funding and coordinating public science education. Sadly, the face-to-face community-level work that has been so valued in the past in Britain (but which, incidentally, has hardly existed anyway in most other parts of Europe) may have to give way to distance-education methods making full use of telematic facilities. The World Wide Web is not the Seventh Cavalry, but certainly it can help in the transmission of information, in making the public aware of such face-to-face opportunities as will continue to exist (especially conferences and summer schools) and in delivering a limited number of appropriate credit-bearing courses.

At the same time, it is necessary to reconstruct the research base for the public understanding and social context of science. The situation is parallel to that faced by the teaching base: across Europe as a whole the research is patchy, fragmented and diverse, while in Britain it is seriously threatened by changes in the structure of the research funding system. In relation to research, the British problem arises not from the Funding Councils' policy towards courses, but from the new framework of Research Assessment Exercises (RAE). This system is not supportive of interdisciplinary research which does not fit into any traditional disciplinary category. Scientific public education overlaps with studies in science policy, epistemology, the philosophy and ethics of science, and the history of science, i.e. the aggregation of mini-disciplines often conveniently labelled "science studies". The difficulty is that neither science studies nor continuing education has the status of an RAE discipline category in its own right. Researchers united in their concern with the context, consequences and communication of science are consequently split among several research categories and are comfortable in none. Science studies and science communication form a natural discipline group, but in Britain it is severely hampered by the present structure of research funding system.

In both teaching and in research, then, the state of affairs is very bleak for promoting the public understanding and context of fundamental science. Nevertheless there are some grounds for optimism, particularly when we consider what is waiting to be achieved on the Europe-wide scale. It is surely reasonable to be positive and enthusiastic about the possibilities ultimately open to us, and to work towards the emergence of the new networks and new institutions that will be necessary to support our work in the future. Education to promote the public understanding of science has a long future!

Notes

1. Martin Counihan, Scientific Ideals, Changing Culture and Continuing Education (paper presented at the University of Hull, July 1994), in *Reflecting on Changing Practices, Contexts and Identities* (Paul Armstrong et al., eds.), Standing Conference on University Teaching and Research in the Education of Adults, University of Leeds, 1994.

2. Martin Counihan, *Cosmic Science, Culture and Society: New Developments in Public Education*, paper presented at the conference Schola Ludus: Science and Public, Comenius University, Bratislava, June 1994.

3. R. Devenish et mult. al., *Public Understanding of Science and University Departments of Continuing Education Science Courses*, 1995.

4. Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council, *Competitive Awards Scheme for Projects in Public Understanding of Science*, 1995.

Silver lining: mature students dawn on higher education.

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'What is the true function of a University? Is it to train the nation's best men, or to sell its gifts to the rich? (J.M. Mactavish, quoted in Mansbridge, 1913:194)

Knowledge is power: the sinister implications

At the heart of the traditional exclusivity of higher education lies a very real power struggle between the privileged few and those others, the many who were being controlled and exploited by that few. Like John Donne's 'usurpt towne', the universities because of their strategic importance in this struggle, have been occupied by the ideology of the dominant whilst at the same time labouring to admit justice. Scholarship, a besieged hostage, instead of generating systems of equality and justice was a tool for the manufacture of perverted systems of thought whose main task was to validate hegemonic dogma. This is a strong accusation, but the merest glance at the history of higher education will prove the case.

Historically, within every enthusiastic piece of academic writing on the worth of the working classes, there stalks its dark shadow: the fear of what will happen to the learned ones if these same working classes are ignored. In nineteenth century writing in particular, the potential for uprising, for inundation, for destruction seems to be always only one slight step to the side. J. M. Mactavish, the Scottish docker quoted at the head of this paper knew of this angst and exploited it when he thundered at Oxford in 1907 on behalf of the Workers Education Association:

"... workpeople can do more for Oxford, than Oxford can do for the workpeople. For, remember, democracy will realise itself, with or without the assistance of Oxford; but if Oxford continues to stand apart from the workpeople, then she will ultimately be remembered, not for what she is, but for what she has been.'" (J. M. Mactavish quoted in Mansbridge, 1913:194)

In this paper I will argue that Mactavish was on the right track although the realisation of his confidence in what the workpeople could do for the universities has taken almost one more century to achieve. Democracy has indeed had its way, not through revolutionary violence but through relatively rapid evolutionary growth. Now, towards the end of our troubled century one result of universal suffrage in the western democracies has been a challenge to the belief that higher education is for an exclusive intellectual elite. Practical proof of the wrong-headedness of elitism has been offered by the growing number of mature students who have taken honours degrees in the last thirty years. The progress of this challenge has been slow when viewed from the perspective of those other individual lives which remained underdeveloped by lack of stimulus, yet rapid in terms of the history of higher education itself. In England, state funding and a succession of political initiatives have brought us to the nineteen-nineties where mass higher education is a familiar concept and the notion of a 'standard age' at which to enter higher education is losing ground to the concept of lifelong learning. Government statistics show that in 1992, 319,400 people over the age of 21 started university or college compared with 281,600 school-leavers, a significant majority.

Elitism: a mission to exclude

When the universities were first founded in England society was a stratified hierarchy for which the most common metaphor was the Great Chain of Being. It was believed that this society was divinely ordered and to question the position of anyone in that order was to question the will of God. It was therefore religious precept rather than the new centres of learning which was responsible for maintaining and validating social inequities. Religious doctrine then became the site of struggle when social structures were challenged in England during the Protestant Reformation.

After the Reformation, a different kind of scholar entered the university colleges. The newly promoted sons of merchants brought with them their own system of social validation. One example of this new thinking is William Perkins, a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge in the sixteenth century. Perkins and thinkers like him put forward the concept of 'the Calling': a Christian call to godliness together with a personal call to realise and exploit individual talents. These beliefs were the result of an English Calvinism which stressed the ascendancy of the elect over hereditary privilege. (Kearney, 1970:51) Belief in the power to climb the hierarchy through personal endeavour, study and grace grew out of the Christian stoic tradition in which Saint Augustine wrote in De Utilitate credendi: 'The wise man, alone... does not sin. And every fool, then, sins save in those acts in which he obeys the wise man.' (Quoted in Colish 1985:214) It is this emphasis, equating wisdom with grace which marks the moment when learning stepped into the power vacuum left in England after the removal of papal supremacy.

The thread which binds grace to education is a major component in the peculiarly missionary tone of English adult education. It is observable in the writings of men such as F. D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley and Albert Mansbridge. (Hall, 1994). On the face of it, such thinking appears to be liberating and egalitarian. However, as with all such claims to exclusive authoritative wisdom, it is open to abuse by the greedy. It is all very well to argue for the primacy of wisdom as a qualification to the administration of power, but when access to that learned wisdom is limited to the privileged few, in this case the intellectually inclined sons of wealthy families, then the centres of learning become, of necessity, exclusive breeding grounds for the propagation of ideas beneficial to those few. Indeed supporters of hereditary systems of power, such as Edmund Burke, would argue that such claims represent the biggest danger to society at large, learning being the loose cannon on the decks of an otherwise tightly organised ship:

> 'The nobility and the clergy... kept learning in existence even in the midst of arms and confusions... Learning paid back what it received to nobility and to priesthood; and paid it with usury... Happy if they had all continued to know their indissoluble union and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition had been satisfied to continue the instructor, and not aspired to be master! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.' (Burke, 1790:173)

Burke, like many a conservative thinker before and since sensed the danger of opening learning up to anyone who does not have an interest in maintaining the status quo. This has meant that although ideas such as those expressed by Perkins had been around for over four hundred years, when Mactavish addressed Oxford, the reality of access to a university education was based still upon wealth rather than ability and the work people knew it. The struggle had merely shifted ground from ecclesiastical versus secular to aristocracy versus bourgeoisie. Both sides in this new struggle however still agreed that ordinary people had no business with higher education; they should only be told what it was good for them to know. The universities remained a possession of the powerful and as a consequence, generated theories sustaining the proposition of the superiority of the few This situation meant that mass access to knowledge was prevented.

Gender: no women please

The large mass of ordinary people forms the biggest group excluded from higher education, but of course there is a second, equally important exclusion, that of all women. A similarly brief look at this history will also serve to confirm the damage which this exclusion has done to our society, and the damning role of higher education within this injustice.
Educated Christian thinkers believed in the moral equality of men's and of women's souls, but this did not mean equality in this world, for woman was seen as a subject of her body, entrapped in sinful matter. Woman's nature was therefore considered to be inferior to that of man. It was Adam who was created in God's image and likeness - woman came as an afterthought, born from Adam's side. Although Eve first tasted the forbidden fruit, the fault was with Adam: knowing her weakness he did not guard her well enough from temptation.
Feeding into this Biblical notion of woman's secondary place in the scheme of things was the equally biologically grounded Aristotelian explanation of woman's position. According to this line of thought, woman's condition is one of essential absence:

"she partakes of the cold and damp humours; and with such deprivation of heat, she inevitably experiences the deprivation of the virtues associated with heat - courage, moral strength, and honesty" (Smith, 1987:27)

A woman, then, is an imperfect man, not fully formed. As Smith also points out, the Christian Aquinas labelled woman in Summa Theologica as "misbegotten man". Even the radical thinker Jean-Jaques Rousseau who, believing in the goodness of natural man, was no Christian wrote:

"The man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive; the one must have both the power and the will; it is enough that the other should offer little resistance. When this principle is admitted, it follows that woman is specially made for man's delight" (Rousseau, 1762:322)

The opinion of centuries of academic males was that education should therefore be different for the woman who was divinely or biologically intended for a secondary role. Indeed, given her innate frailty, an education which was suitable for the man would constitute a positive danger to the morally weaker woman.
Sinister as the realities of gendered role expectations are in their impact upon educational systems and

individuals, there is one final, even more insidious aspect to constructions of the feminine which Virginia Woolf uncovers in A Room of One's Own. This represents the most damaging accusation against higher education's claim to moral rectitude. Woolf's narrator muses on the exclusion of women from the higher education system and attempts to find reasons for it:

"Possibly when the professor insisted a little too emphatically upon the inferiority of women, he was concerned not with their inferiority, but with his own superiority" (Woolf, 1929:34-5).

Woolf uses the professor in this instance as the supreme example of patriarchy in action. Adopting a tone of disingenuous mystification at his anger when he is in possession of so much power, she tells her reader that in order to gain the 'courage and strength' necessary to succeed in life, a belief in one's own superiority is a great help - 'Without self-confidence we are as babes in the cradle.' (ibid: 35) Patriarchy, according to Woolf, constructs the importance of the male upon the inferiority of the female:

"...they say to themselves as they go into the room, I am the superior of half the people here, and it is thus that they speak with that self-confidence, that self-assurance, which have such profound consequences in public life and lead to such curious notes in the margins of the private mind" (ibid: 36).

Thus the female plays an equally important role in the maintenance of the male's importance and power whilst at the same time being accredited with nothing.

For the present purposes I must linger a while longer with Woolf's male professor for she is correct to select him has the supreme example of this noxious system of oppression. It is his intellectual authority which has been used by all other men to authenticate so convenient a system of beliefs. It is thus that higher education has colluded with oppression. Sadly though, this oppression is not limited to that of an entire sex, but also, as demonstrated above, the superiority of the male academic has been built upon the inferiority of the rest of the species. Woolf suggests that her professor is angry in the way in which the rich get angry with the poor; through anxiety that the poor might take away that which the rich possess. Such anger has also traditionally been directed against the uneducated for what might appear to be the same reasons, but a closer look reveals more sinister motives. Not only is the power which knowledge brings involved but also that equally important commodity, confidence.

Education and knowledge are not the same as riches. This is not a finite supply which must only be diminished if shared. Rather the reverse is true. And yet through generations the educated have held the multitude from their doors. Occasionally a few exceptions have been allowed in, to serve as an example that the outstanding ones among the masses, the ones who most resemble their superior selves can, with a disproportionate amount of help, be brought into the citadel. Self-evidently it would be impossible for the masses to perform in a similarly exceptional way.

This exclusivity has in the past been difficult for ordinary people to cope with. It was intimidating because it was meant to be. With this in mind, it is significant that so many mature students report that the experience of higher education has given them confidence. This is perhaps because confidence, unlike learning, but like power, is finite and has previously been commandeered for the exclusive use of the few.

Mass access to the important national asset of higher education, brings with it ever increasing numbers of mature students with strong independent thoughts of their own already in place. Because of the nineteen forty-four Education Act, many academics are themselves from working class homes with no real interest in perpetuating an elitist system. Many mature students are also becoming professional academics. Cultural barriers are being attacked from within as well as from without.

These days, no one sees mature students as in some way exceptional charity cases or misplaced victims to be rescued. They are a valuable asset to any learning institution. In Southampton, statistically more of us go on to postgraduate work than do the younger 'A' level access students: 14.3% of mature graduates compared to 13.8% of so called standard age graduates. (Johnston and Croft, 1994:5) Adult educators have long realised the extent of the potential in the mature population. Thankfully, the rest of our colleagues in higher education are finally catching on.

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Conversing internationally

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Introduction - the Journal

The *International Congress of University Adult Education Journal* started in 1962; volume I number 1 appeared in April that year. By September 1970 there had been 14 issues, when Volume IX Number 3 appeared on the occasion of the International Congress of University Adult Education meeting in Montreal. At that time the founding Editor, S G Raybould elected to retire and I became the Editor, a post I continue to occupy. My tenure of this editorship thus chances to coincide with the life of SCUTREA itself. This persuaded me to look back at the journal in the same spirit as that ruling preparation for SCUTREA's 25th anniversary Conference. In July 1997 (Vol. XVI No. 2) the journal's title was altered to become the *International Journal of University Adult Education* but evolving continuity of identity, purpose and also numbering was maintained. The current issue is XXXIV, 2, July 1995.

In 1971 there was an Editorial Board of three, nominally and publicly with responsibilities called 'General and organisational', 'Research and training', and 'Comparative studies; also training'. In fact this says more about the intended contents than about the actual modus operandi, and the Board was allowed to lapse with the July 1976 number. From November that year the internationally strong 16-person Congress Executive effectively doubled as an editorial board, and a Newsletter was launched, the Editor of which (initially Colin Titmus) was also identified in the journal front-matter.

In November 1993 a formal Editorial Board was reintroduced, accompanied by more formal refereeing of articles. This Board of fourteen included four women. Its membership was drawn from Universities in all major regions of the world. Meanwhile the Newsletter, now edited by John Morgan, had acquired higher salience and more substance, carrying some book reviews for the journal have always been exceptional. Essentially the journal continued to serve as a vehicle for, usually, four to six papers of, usually, from three to six thousand words. The Journal is described as "a forum for university adult educators ... [reflecting] diverse areas of interest such as research and development; Adult Education; programme administration; education and development; comparative systems; public policy and adult education; finance; methods and delivery systems, etc."

The guidelines for contributors are silent in respect of subject- matter, which is implied by the Aims of Congress itself: "to develop and maintain communication and co-operation among university adult educators concerned with all aspects of the education of adults." For many years an Editorial Note expressed an intention to include "at least one article on problems of university adult education in under-developed countries [sic], unless a complete number of the Journal is being devoted to such a region in the same year." Although this note was eventually dropped it served to signal a particular developmental purpose which has tended to characterise the journal. The same spirit of internationalism informed a desire, expressed periodically in editorials, to ensure that the voices of university adult educators were heard from all possible regions of the world, and not solely from resource- and research-rich countries.

The journal thus teeters: between the socially purposive (national and community developmental, equity-oriented, internationalistic) values which have characterised university adult education especially in its more international manifestations; and the pull towards academic respectability and 'scientific' status which affects many education journal. In Britain at least, and in SCUTREA specifically, the tension is not unfamiliar.

Authors

So much for the basic facts, the biography, of the journal as I have known it. Who actually contributes, and what do they write about?

Rather than aggregate data for the whole twenty-five years I have chosen for the purpose of this paper to take three periods, each of four years, which provide matching periodic snapshots for 1971-74, 1981-84, and 1991-94. This may enable us to discern trends, if any there be, as a basis for considering some of the issues of role, purpose and identity which interest me.

Nowadays, but not when the journal started, it is natural to ask about the gender balance within authorship.

The position is as in Table One.

Table One

five year period	all papers*	by women	by men	others**
1971-74	57	2	51	4
1981-84	65	5.5 #	53.5	6
1991-94	70	20.5	48.5	1

* excludes all but very few editorials (e.g. quest-editorships)
** statements from intergovernmental organisations etc.
# fractions indicates joint male-female authorship

The significant rise in female authorship to a position still far short of equality from a tiny base is conspicuous. Note too the gradual increase in size as pressure of supply has increased.

Equity was more consciously recognised in another respect: the desire to hear voices from the South as well as the North, and from seldom-represented countries as well as from the obvious sources. An international journal edited in Britain is liable to a UK bias in its authorship, as well as to colonisation from the United States with its large academic community seeking English-language outlets for scholarly papers in the academic publishing culture. The position with respect to authorship is as in Table Two.

Conspicuous here is the rise in the number of papers from the UK (probably reflecting in part the pressure of the Research Assessment Exercise) and from other parts of Europe (a consequence of greater bodies like ESREA perhaps).

Contents

It is less easy to summarise the subject-matter of the papers published, but again four-yearly cohorts may suggest some trends, allowing that any the journal, as the organ of Congress, was initially to consider the main tasks of university adult educators, conceived as research, the training of adult educators (cf. SCUTREA), organisational matters, and also comparative studies.

A classification of the subject-matter of papers (with a few papers counting under more than one heading) is as in Table Three.

Table Two

five yr.	Africa	Australasia & S. Pacific	East Asia	Asia (other)	Eastern Europe	Europe (other)	UK	North America
1971-74	12	5	3	4	2	5	7	12
1981-84	14	4	11	13 *	0	9	6	13
1991-94	11	2	4	2	3	12	20	13

* including eight in a special issue on South-East Asia
in addition the following were published:
in 1971-74 one paper each from Arab World and Latin America
in 1981-84 one each from the Arab World, Latin America and the Caribbean
in 1991-94 one each from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table Three

subject matter	1971-74	1981-84	1991-94
training of adult educators / staff devt	5	5	3
research	3	6	10
comparative studies	5	1	13
philosophical studies	3	6	3
sociological and policy studies	3	4	9
history, AE and the law	1	2	1
national/regional policy including LLE	9	16	13
role of universities generally	10		
individual institutional studies	4	13	6
teaching/learning, students, curriculum (other than -)	5	6	16
distance education/learning	1	5	6
special groups, clienteles, inc. gender* (* 1 in 1981-84, 4 in 1991-94)		7	4
participation, motivation, withdrawal	2	3	
evaluation	2	3	3
development issues, literacy	4	6	4
WEA, NGOs and universities	1	1	
organisation, administration, marketing		5	2

Discussion: functions and purposes, celebrations and reflections

IJUAE shares some defining characteristics with SCUTREA. Its parent body, *ICUAE*, also and naturally has something in common with SCUTREA, and main difference being that whereas SCUTREA, as a national network, has been able to sustain its commitment to annual conference Congress has virtually ceased to function in this way. As an international collegial network with a membership similar in situation and interest to SCUTREA's it now exists virtually only as an idea and through its two media, the journal and the newsletter.

SCUTREA's central concern is with [sic] university teaching and research in the education of adults. for *IJUAE* the same core professional interests in the journal I inherited were accompanied by concerns with organisation - a perennial preoccupation of the senior directors and administrators who with the professoriate of the day were able to afford to jetset in the sixties - and, naturally in an international body of a profession chronically anxious about identity and academic status, by an interest in comparative method. One recalls that at the time I became editor of this journal SCUTREA was created through a Young Turks' breakaway (all male?) from the slightly sclerotic Universities Council for Adult Education, known colloquially rather than with great affection as the Directors' Club.

The Directors' Club subsequently UCACE and latterly further democratised as UACE, really no longer exists; directors of adult education have become scarce indeed, while the activity of adult (continuing) education has blossomed, partly by colonising new spaces. For SCUTREA there has been (and there persists) a question how far its community or collegiality is able to renew itself, and from where the new life and membership come. Institutional exclusivity has been broken and gender equality well-nigh achieved. Is the trend one towards concentration into fewer 'centres of excellence', digging deeper for casualised research staff and graduate students, supplemented by a scattering of possibly lonely individuals in the many HE institutions (and elsewhere) which lack a strong departmental ACE focus? In this event (or any other) what are the cohering and abiding values which make SCUTREA a community? - a conviviality worthy of celebration? What has been replaced, renewed, and what may be in need of renewal?

If these questions stir doubts among SCUTREA's faithful (it is a strong and convivial community in my experience this past decade), they are amplified when asked of the international 'community' which inhabits, or may inhabit, the ether and ethos behind the Congress journal. The readership is I think small, judged by subscribing membership (which is partly individual, partly institutional); actual readership in some institutions of the South is I suspect rather higher. It may be that a growing cadre of graduate ACE students with broader, international, horizons, not just in schools of development studies, also find their way to their library copies. The rewarding feedback as editor I find is from rather remote and isolated colleagues for whom the journal is something of an intellectual - and moral -lifeline: non-superhighway to an invisible college of similarly minded colleagues who know of one another in part through this medium.

Since the infrastructure of ICUAE has all but ceased to exist it remains to be seen whether *IJUAE* will survive much longer. It would not be hard to arrange its financial viability if the need and demand are there. More important is the question whether the effort is in any larger scheme of things required. There is no shortage of vehicles to carry our publishable efforts forward to the March 1996 Research Assessment Exercise and, if such there be, to subsequent RAEs. It is perhaps cause for regret that the UK proportion of *IJUAE* papers has risen somewhat - or for celebration that they have not taken over more.

I conclude with a not entirely disconnected thought. It concerns the journal as an artefact and a means of communication. The journal I inherited has a well-meaning but unfortunately paternalistic symbol - too abstract to be known without explanation and too embarrassingly ethno-insensitive to explain. This was quietly dropped, but that apart the journal itself has changed its appearance remarkably little since then. It had a rough ride for a while because it could not afford limousine treatment. Sent to India for production it suffered all kinds of delays and humiliations, appearing frequently in disastrously proofed form and sometimes as a annual three-in-one volume. Eventually its production moved East to the more high-tech environment of Hong Kong where for the present it continues to be produced with considerable efficiency and usually to a high quality of finish - distributed direct to subscribers on time unless the editor has delayed.

My preferred question is whether the journal fulfils an important, or unique, role. For me this has more to do with sustaining and as necessary redefining a core set of socio-educational values which inform both the older UK adult education tradition and, with remarkable resilience, also the international adult education 'community', than with the scientific status of the journal.

A long-serving editor interested more in the content than the appearance of the journal, working with a Treasurer in North America to produce a journal in Hong Kong, is a recipe for visual conservatism and a different kind of conservatism in text. The familiarity of appearance, form and function may appeal to rather isolated university adult educators dispersed across the globe. Superhighways are not relevantly exciting if you rely on a phone that won't work and a road that is impassable after rain. None the less the contrast between *IJUAE* and *Scoop* as developed by Nod Miller could scarcely be starker. If the medium is the whole message, the journal is conservative indeed. It may be however, that the appearance is reassuring and functional. If not visually challenging there appears yet to remain enough of a nip in the ideas, and the values expressed and sometimes displayed behind them, to celebrate, at least a little, and to predict reasonable longevity.

A study of the competence levels of the heads of adult education in Turkey

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Introduction

The training of adult educators differs in style and outcome from one country to another depending upon what is understood and comprehended by the term "adult education". Despite this fact, there is general agreement in the adult education world that, as stressed by Jarvis (1991), postgraduate degree programmes (Ph.D, M.A. and M.Phil), in-service training programmes and undergraduate certificate or diploma programmes are much more widely available than pre-service training programmes and bachelor degree programmes on adult & continuing education.

Despite the fact that education systems consist of formal and non-formal structures, the non-formal parts or, broadly speaking, adult education is seen as a poor-cousin of the education family in most of the countries. Therefore, it is assumed that teacher training or degrees in education is the main basis of all educational practices and, of course, adult education. In addition to this, there is a tacit agreement among practitioners that adult educators have a natural flair for organising, directing and teaching of the adult education, so they don't need and require any training or regular courses or programmes of adult and continuing education.

The editors of *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, P. Jarvis and J.E. Thomas (1995), have stressed that an academic and theoretical base should be acquired for the field of adult and continuing education like all worthwhile practices. Unless it does, practices in the field of adult and continuing education become uninspired and enter a downward spiral which promises third-rate work because they, like all practices, need the sustenance and nourishment of academic ideas. This strategic task can be achieved by the universities.

This paper, first, seeks to give a brief portrayal of the non-formal education system in Turkey. Second, it sums up the results of research which was carried out in 1991 concerning the competence levels of the heads of adult education as part of a programme of a postgraduate study in Ankara, Turkey using sample survey technique. Third, it discusses the role of the universities in training adult educators in Turkey. Finally, it analyses future training needs of the adult educators who will work in a decentralised system.

General portrayal

Turkey is a developing country which is located at the gateway of the three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. And it is also a bridge between the Europe and Asia geographically, culturally and socially. It has a land area of 780 580 square kilometres with 60 million population. Turkey is a unique country whose 99 % of the population is Muslim, and is based on democratic and secular system of government with a pluralist and parliamentary system. Administratively, the country is divided in to 76 provinces (county) and 840 sub-provinces (district).

In general, public administration system is based upon centralisation and deconcentration rather than decentralisation through the highly centralised decision making in the capital city with a division of responsibility among a number of ministries. So, education system in Turkey is over-centralised. Almost all decisions are taken by the Ministry of National Education (MNE) located at the capital city, Ankara.

According to the Basic Law of National Education, enacted in 1973 (no.1739), the education system in Turkey consists of two main parts: formal and non-formal education. The specific objectives of non-formal education or adult education are defined in accordance with the general objectives and basic principles of national education as follows:

*Providing educational opportunities for people's adaptation to the scientific, technological, economic, social and cultural development of the society.

*Teaching literacy, providing life-long educational opportunities to those whose education is incomplete.

*Providing education to safeguard, develop, orientate and establish our national cultural values.

*Assisting adults to understand and develop the habits of collective living, solidarity, cooperation, collaboration and organisation.

*Teaching to people necessary nutritional and health habits for increasing the living standards and economic efficiency.

*Helping adults acquire the habits required to use leisure time efficiently.

*Providing short-term courses and training opportunities to adults for learning new professions and technical skills in accordance with the employment policy and development of the economy.

*Providing the opportunities of continuing education to working persons for improving their professions and skills (MEB, 1985).

Despite the fact that there are many adult education providers in Turkey as voluntary bodies, local governments, the MNE and other official bodies, the MNE is accepted as the dominant and main adult education provider. The General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education (GDANE) is the responsible unit for all sorts of adult educational practices through the country. There are 840 Adult Education Centres (AECs) which are established in each sub-province (district). In addition to the AECs, Practical Craft Schools for Girls, Advanced Handicraft Institutes, Technical Education Centres for Adults, Apprenticeship Training Centres, Turkish-German Vocational Training Centres and Evening Schools are the considerable adult education institutes which depends upon the MNE via different general directorate. The organisational hierarchy for non-formal education in Turkey, displayed in Figure 1, might be described as follows:

At the top, the MNE is responsible for all sorts of formal and non-formal educational practices with general directorates, boards, units, provincial and sub-provincial organisations. GDANE, which is responsible for planning, administration, organisation, coordination, cooperation and collaboration of the adult educational services provided by the MNE, prepares programmes and plans, publishes some materials for local organisations of the MNE and makes decisions on adult educational resources and developments as a central organisation. According to the acts regarding public administration, the governor of a province who is appointed by the government, is the representative of the executive power at local level, and is responsible for all civil and administrative operations. The PDNE who is appointed by the government, is responsible for all educational both formal and non-formal practices depending upon the governor. The PDNE select their deputies in accordance with the population of the province. One of them who is called Head of Adult Education, is responsible for administering, planning, programming and supervising the adult educational activities on provincial level. In some provinces, one of the deputies is responsible for only non-formal education but in some one of the responsibilities is non-formal education. The governor of sub-province, like governor of province, is representative of the executive power at sub-provincial level depending upon the governor of province. Sub-provincial director of national education, like the PDNE , is responsible for all formal and non-formal educational practices at sub-provincial level depending upon governor of sub-province, the PDNE and the governor of province. Finally, the directors of adult education centres and apprenticeship training centres depend upon the sub-provincial director of national education. The relationships between these level are completely hierarchical, e.g. director of adult education centre is not able to do something without permission of the one of the authorities in this hierarchy.

FIGURE 1
ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHY FOR NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN TURKEY

Minister of National Education

General Director of Apprenticeship and Non-Formal Education

Provincial Director of National Education

Head of Adult Education

Governor of Sub-province

Sub-provincial Director of National Education

Adult Education Centre
Apprenticeship Training Centre

Methodology

This research was carried out in 1991 as part of a programme of postgraduate study in Ankara, Turkey. The purpose of the study was to determine actual competence levels of the heads of adult education organization at local level, and to assess their in-service training needs. It was based upon the views of their superiors who are the PDNE, the views of their sub-ordinates who are the director of AEC, and their own perception. This study was based on a sample survey on the analysis of a mailed questionnaire to 72 PDNE, 72 HAE and 248 DAEC, totalling 392.

Result of the study

The main characteristics of the subjects are depicted in Table 1. A close look at the Table 1 indicates that both HAE and DAEC are mostly male, under the age of 46 teachers who have 19 years or more educational, 10 years or more administrative and 6 years or less adult education experience. None of the adult educators have been trained in adult education. Most of the HAE are the religious and social science teachers. Most of the DAEC are the primary school teachers who received their preliminary undergraduate degrees by distance education programmes.

As it is seen in Table 2 regarding the training needs of the HAE, first, according the views of the DAEC, they, i.e. HAE, need in-service training concerning the competence area of "Coordination, Community-Institution Relations, Decision Making, Research-Development, Evaluation, Communication, Organisational Climate and Personnel Management". Second, according to the views of PDNE, Heads of Adult Education don't need in-service training regarding the competence areas covered by this research. Third, according to their own evaluation, HAE need in-service training concerning the competence area of coordination. Finally, according to the evaluation of whole group, HAE need in-service training in relation to the competence area of "Coordination, Community-Institution Relations, and Research-Development".
At the level of competences, the results are as follows;

a)The evaluation of DAEC: Heads of adult education display 36 competences out of 52 in low degrees.
b)The Evaluation of PDNE: Heads of adult education are inadequate for only 7 competences out of 52.
c)The evaluation of HAE: Heads of adult education are insufficient for 12 competences out of 52.
d)Whole group: Heads of adult education display 28 competences out of 52 in low degrees.

The distributions of these 28 competences by the competence areas are as follows:

Coordination	5
Research-Development	5
Community-Institution Relation	4
Decision Making	4
Evaluation	4
Communication	2
Organisational Climate	2
Leadership	1
Using Power-Responsibility	1

Finally, the analyses touched upon the difference among the perceptions of the subject groups briefly. According to results of t-test, firstly, there are significant differences at .05 level between the views of DAEC and PDNE, and similarly those between the DAEC and HAE regarding the actual competence levels of the heads of adult education. Secondly, there are no significant differences at .05 level between the views of HAE and PDNE regarding the actual competence levels of the heads of adult education.

Adult education - university relations

Turkish adult educational traditions might be dated back to the sixth century in Central Asia. In its contemporary meaning, the history of adult education in Turkey began after the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1920. The Arabic alphabet was replaced with the Latin alphabet. In order to teach literacy by using new Latin alphabet, general literacy mobilisation was announced. One of the most important principles of the Ataturkist idea is the populism. It implies that educational, cultural, social and economic revolutions should be based upon grass-roots so the relationships between the people and the government should be close to widespread educational, social, cultural and economic innovations and reforms.

For that reason, the term ‘people's education’ is preferred to adult education, and people's education (halk egitimi) is still more meaningful, comprehensive and preferable than adult education (yetiskin egitimi).

Despite the above-mentioned facts, the topic of adult education is quite fresh and new academically and theoretically in Turkey. There are three Turkish Universities which provide research and teaching on adult education. One of them is the University of Ankara, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Adult Education which was established in 1989, and began teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in 1990-91 academic year. Before 1989, the Department was established and abolished because of the political reasons so it was part of the Department of Educational Administration and Planning. The Bosphorus University has offered postgraduate programmes in adult education for many years. Finally, a second adult education department was founded at the University of Marmara, Faculty of Education in 1992, and began teaching at undergraduate level.

As it is well-known fact that Universities in the Western World are quite interested in adult education practically, theoretically and academically. Therefore, extension courses, extra-mural studies has been accepted as important milestones of the adult education history, and the term university adult education was born. Regrettably, it is not possible to mention the same things for Turkey. Turkish Universities don't have any units or departments which organise community adult educational activities for the society. There is no extra-mural traditions. The MNE which is the biggest adult education providers in Turkey, does not have good enough cooperation, collaboration and partnerships with the universities in order to provide academic and theoretical basis for adult educational practices and staff development activities.

The MNE provides staff development opportunities to adult educators employed by the MNE but the MNE is not keen to invite adult educationists in order to get academic and theoretical contribution of them. The MNE uses its own staff as the adult educators’ trainers who don't have any degree, diploma or qualifications in adult education. Therefore, the quality of in-service training programmes is very poor, adult educators are not able to be attracted by in-service training programmes.

Moreover, the MNE is still consistent to employ teachers as full-time adult educators who are unqualified in adult education, instead of employing quite a few adult educators who are specifically trained in adult education and, who have received their degrees (BA, MA or Ph.D) on adult education. And, the older adult educators believe that formal training in adult education is waste of time; practicing is more important than theorising in the field of adult education (Duman, 1991).

TABLE 1
MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

	HAE		DAEC
Total Respondents	n=48		n=178
sex	100%	male	99%
Age	79%	under 46	76%
Education Level	58%	Teacher Training Institute	31%
	35%	Undergraduate	62% Pre-Bachelor

TABLE 1 (contd.)
MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS

	HAE		DAEC
Major	25%	Soc. Sci. Teacher	88% Primary Sch.Teac.
	23%	Religious Teacher	3% Mat. Teacher
	17%	Mat. Teacher	
Educational Exp.	54%	19 or more years	58%
	27%	16-18 years	11%
	19%	13-15 years	12%
	0	10-12 years	17%
Exp. in Adult Educ.	42%	4-6 years	29%
	40%	1-3 years	24%
	10%	7-9 years	15%
Administrative Exp.	23%	10-12 years	16%
	21%	16-18 years	10%
	15%	7-9 years	19%
	15%	19 or more years	16%
Participation in In-service Training	6%	none	21%
	25%	once	31%
	15%	twice	26%
	14%	three times	11%
	40%	four times or more	11%

Conclusion

What the study shows is that the system of adult education in Turkey is run by the people who are inadequately trained in the theory, philosophy and practice of adult education to do their jobs. In addition, their lack of appropriate qualifications is not properly acknowledged by their superiors and themselves. The main problem is political: The MNE recognises only teacher training as the basis for all educational practices so that the MNE is still determined to employ teachers who are unqualified in adult education instead of specifically trained as adult educators.

Both formal and non-formal education systems in Turkey are confronted an overcentralised public administration system and oversized-inflexible structure with in the MNE. Decentralisation of some public services such as education, culture, health and traffic that are placed in political agenda, are crucial to provide effective, accountable, responsive and efficient services. In this manner, decentralisation of the adult educational services can be accepted as the step to initial decentralisation. In a decentralised system, the professional employment of the university-trained adult educators could be achieved more easily than in an overcentralised system.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that adult educationists in the universities have a major role to play in providing in-service training programmes to improve staff development strategies, developing basic research to illuminate adult educational problems, and improving the theoretical basis for adult and continuing education in Turkey.

TABLE 2
MEANS OF THE COMPETENCE AREAS BY SUBJECT GROUPS

Competence Areas	DAEC[1]	PDNE[2]	HAE[3]	Whole Group
Decision Making	3.14	3.83	3.79	3.59
Coordination	3.04	3.72	3.40	3.39
Communication	3.36	4.08	3.82	3.75
Personnel Management	3.47	4.08	4.06	3.87
Leadership	3.58	4.10	3.99	3.89
Organizational Climate	3.42	3.97	4.01	3.80
Using Power-Responsibility	3.60	4.07	4.09	3.92
Community-Inst. Relations	3.12	3.52	3.53	3.39
Research-Development	3.24	3.63	3.61	3.48
Evaluation	3.31	3.76	3.66	3.57

[1] DAEC: Director of Adult Education Centre.

[2] PDNE: Provincial Director of National Education.

[3] HAE : Head of Adult Education.

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Vision, provision and television: an Australian perspective on 25 years of adult literacy development

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Introduction

This paper discusses the development of adult literacy provision in Australia from around 1970 to 1995, suggesting that much of the early action was the result of concern by individual educators, and that their vision led to increased provision as government policy (and funding) caught up. One of the more recent outcomes of increased government funding was the development of a national television teaching series aimed at adults who had literacy difficulties but who had not sought assistance through existing provision.

The seventies

As in most Western industrialised countries, evidence began to emerge in Australia in the early 1970s that a considerable number of adults had literacy difficulties. It was not something that providing agencies had been looking for (CAE, 1974, iv):

> "...[the Council of Adult Education, Victoria] stumbled, as it were, on the problem. It had set out, in the first instance, to discover at first hand by direct contact what the educational needs of the disadvantaged suburbs were, those needs which were not being met by traditional programs. The direct contact with social workers, community groups, and educational authorities in the Western suburbs uncovered the problem of illiteracy overnight."

A 1974 survey in Sydney (Goyen, 1977) indicated that almost 4 per cent of Australians born in English-speaking countries were functionally illiterate according to the UNESCO definition used. By 1976, there was a trickle of adult literacy program development in each State. However, there was no concerted effort, and the concern of individual educators in each State was an important factor at this time.

Two reports on the role of the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector in Australia, the Kangan Report (1974) and the Richardson Report (1975), helped draw attention to the plight of adults with inadequate literacy. It was not until the Richardson Report that much consideration was given to the use of Commonwealth funds granted to the States for *adult* education purposes - until then such provision had not been a significant responsibility of the States (Pearse, 1976: 78). There was support too from a House of Representatives Select Committee report, *Learning difficulties in children and adults* (Cadman, 1976) and the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (Fitzgerald, 1976). State and Federal Governments responded to the pressure exerted through these reports and increasing community concern - by 1980 there was significant TAFE or equivalent adult literacy provision in every State and the ACT (Dymock, 1982). Earmarked Commonwealth funds, directed through the Technical and Further Education Commission, were generally used by the States to finance innovative projects, while State Government funds were used to maintain the schemes, to pay the salaries of full-time professional staff, and to extend and improve the quality of service offered (White, 1980: 4).

The increasing number of full- and part-time professional staff were influential in encouraging the development of government policy on adult literacy from the late 1970s, but it was sometimes difficult for them to act as advocates for expansion of services to their own employing agencies. Consequently, the late seventies also saw the emergence of adult literacy advocacy bodies at both State and national level. New South Wales and Victoria were the first to have State councils, composed mainly of those involved in the field. Nationally, a report by a working party of the Australian Association of Adult Education (AAAE, 1976) led to the establishment of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy (ACAL).

The eighties

With increasing demand on services and growing public concern about the extent of adult illiteracy, the newly elected Federal Labour Government in 1983 supported a joint Commonwealth-State campaign to combat illiteracy, but there was doubt about its long-term commitment. It was 1987 before the Commonwealth Government announced a firm policy on adult literacy by endorsing the National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987), with funding of around $4 million over two financial years for what became the Adult Literacy Action Campaign (ALAC).

The most notable ALAC research project was a survey of Australian adult literacy, published as *No single measure* (Wickert, 1989), which drew considerable public and government attention and was to provide a strong basis for further government action. Despite the success of ALAC, Simpson (1990: 11), writing in 1989, suggested that "... gains made by ALAC are severely at risk. Victoria has now joined New South Wales in having a reasonable, recurrent base for adult literacy provision but development in the other states and territories is still embryonic."

Towards 2000

However, the activities generated by International Literacy Year (ILY), 1990 were able to maintain the momentum of the Adult Literacy Action Campaign. The Commonwealth Government committed around $6 million for ILY purposes from 1989 to 1991. ILY generated considerable public awareness of the incidence of literacy and numeracy inadequacy in the community and of its social and economic impact; within the adult literacy community it generated substantially increased research, and professional development opportunities (DEET, 1992).

The momentum established by ALAC and continued by ILY activities, coupled with a review in 1990 of Commonwealth language and literacy programs (DEET, 1992, 97), led to the release in August 1991 of a Federal Government Policy Paper, *Australia's language: the Australian language and literacy policy* (DEET, 1991). At last adult literacy had become an issue significant enough for it to be the subject of a major Federal education policy.

The Australian Language and Literacy Policy (ALLP) has four goals, three of them relating to languages other than English, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and language services provided by interpreters and translators, respectively. The fourth goal is about English language and literacy (DEET, 1991: 4):

"All Australian residents should maintain and develop a level of spoken and written English which is appropriate for a range of contexts, with the support of education and training programs addressing their diverse learning needs."

The Government committed a total of more than $130 million between 1991 and 1995 for adult literacy provision by the TAFE and community education sectors, and for curriculum and teacher development and similar purposes. It pledged substantial additional funds for the training of teachers in TAFE, industry and the community, and for labour market and workplace literacy programs. The adult literacy component of the ALLP also provided for assistance to jobseekers and collaboration with the States and Territories. Up to $1.5 million was provided for a national adult literacy television teaching series, which became *The Reading Writing Roadshow*, first broadcast in 1994.

The Commonwealth Minister for Education, Employment and Training has also established the Australian Language and Literacy Council (ALLC) within the National Board of Employment, Education and Training to advise him on the implementation of the ALLP. Professional support for the field is partly provided by the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia, which is largely funded by DEET under the ALLP.

Subsequently, another Federal Government policy on employment and growth, *Working Nation* (DEET, 1994), has re-emphasized the need for literacy as a component of vocational training. Additionally, Federal Government funding for the vocational education and training sector, including adult literacy provision, is now being channelled through a single agency, the Australian National Training Authority.

Changes in adult literacy policy and provision 1970-95

In a paper of this length, it is not possible to mention all of the significant adult literacy developments in Australia between 1970 and 1995. It is possible, however, to discern several changes in the features of adult literacy policy and provision over that period.

The purposes of adult literacy education

The 1975 Richardson Report regarded lack of literacy skills as primarily a barrier to further education. But, as White (1985: 32) has observed, developments in the seventies arose principally from the concern of individuals rather than from government policies. And they were concerns 'not simply to provide skills to cope with the written word in everyday life but to enable people to gain greater freedom to make choices' (CAE, 1974: 4). Although the Australian Language and Literacy Policy acknowledges the needs of the individual, it is firmly grounded in the Government's preoccupation with award restructuring and employment strategies (DEET, 1991: e.g. 1-2; 7).

The result has been the development since the late eighties of labour market and workplace basic education programs. Such initiatives in the workplace have undoubtedly helped to address the problem of reaching many who have not sought help from institutionally based programs (as has *The Reading Writing Roadshow*), but there is a concern that employers may be looking for a quick fix. Government policy of letting such programs out for tender has brought competition between providers. *Come in Cinderella*, a Senate Standing Committee's report on adult and community education (Aulich, 1991: 90), acknowledged that 'there are important perspectives on literacy which are not necessarily present in current thinking about labour market programs'.

The place of adult literacy and basic education

Another legacy of increased Government support is that adult basic education has moved from the margins to the mainstream. Kirner (1984: 153) warned in 1984 of the marginalisation of the adult literacy movement because of its individual focus, its volunteer nature, its lack of clear integration with 'system wide' equal opportunity programs, and 'its preoccupation with the part, adult literacy/basic education, rather than with the whole, equal outcomes'. Ten years later, the use of volunteers is diminishing and those that continue are generally being trained to standards set by wider educational systems, and group work is becoming more the norm (Black, 1990: 6).

But the mainstream position of adult basic education has not come through a commitment to equal opportunity or equal outcomes (although those features are there). Two of the reasons were the impact of *No Single Measure* and the perceived economic implications for individuals and industry of limited literacy skills (Black, 1990: 6). The third reason is that adult literacy has been clearly linked with *language* in Federal Government reports, the *Australian language and literacy policy* (1991), and several commissioned research projects.

Expansion of research

In the 1970s there was very little published about adult literacy in Australia. The Australian Council for Adult Literacy helped to fill the gap with a series of annual conferences at which (mainly) practitioners exchanged experiences and tried to develop a body of knowledge and appropriate practices. Experts from Britain, the USA and Canada were brought in to stimulate the debate about methods and materials. There was a trickle of publications, and some local research from which findings were rarely disseminated to a wider audience.

This position changed in the 1980s as professional organisations became as much interested in the why of what they were doing as the how. The research triggered in the latter half of the decade under the Adult Literacy Action Campaign was carried forward under the Australian Language and Literacy Policy. Significant national-level projects have involved adult literacy practitioners and university academics, with the findings usually published. At least two professional journals have also emerged, along with a plethora of newsletters. Research networks have also been established under the aegis of the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia.

Professionalisation of ALBE teachers

The move from 'marginal status to centre stage' (Black, 1990: 6) has meant not only a higher profile for adult basic education, but also pressure for professional development and accreditation of teachers and tutors, for core curricula, for comparable assessment across programs and States. A National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy (AEC/MOVEET, 1993) has been developed to address the goal quoted above from the Australian Language and Literacy Policy. A National Staff Development Committee for Vocational Education and Training has been attempting to develop a more cohesive approach to professional development. Recently preservice tertiary education courses have emerged in an attempt to meet the specific needs of adult literacy and basic education teachers. There is no doubt that a more professional and consistent approach to adult literacy and numeracy provision was overdue. The quality of the preparation of teachers and volunteer tutors varied, and students were consequently not always offered the most effective tuition.

As with any development based on increased government funding, greater accountability is required, which is only proper. However, one of the potential dangers is that adult literacy provision becomes too organised, too institutionalised and regulated - that government policy makers set the agenda because they control the funds and that 'professionals' take over practice and everything is neatly packaged. The Chair of the Australian Language and Literacy Council, a former State Education Minister, observed (Cavalier, 1994):

> "Those who believe that literacy courses will fit neatly inside the present obsession for credentials and certification are very wrong. People have embarked on the courses precisely because they contain not a smack of the schooling and measured outcomes which serve to alienate them."

The face of adult literacy provision in Australia has changed considerably over the past twenty five years. From its early development, urged on by individual educators concerned as much about personal development as the improvement of literacy skills, it has become more professional, better funded, organised, evaluated and increasingly standardised. There is generally a more sophisticated understanding of adult literacy, teaching and therefore learning is increasingly effective, and those who seek assistance will find it. And yet, for some the feeling persists that the complex nature of adult literacy development will continue to challenge policy makers and educators alike, well into the next century.

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Women's studies and adult education: a shared agenda?

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Introduction

This paper emerges from my experience as an adult educator teaching and co-ordinating Women's Studies and current debates around the contradictions inherent in offering Women's Studies programmes through the higher education mainstream. It may be that this contradiction is less likely to emerge within a Department of Adult Continuing Education. Is there not a shared relationship with major twentieth century social movements? Certainly, it has been observed that a primary imperative of the adult education movement has been social change with adult education enjoying close relationships with social movements. Similarly, the emerging Women's Studies of the seventies enjoyed important links with, and in fact emerged from, the women's movement. Hence, with hindsight, it seems appropriate that many early Women's Studies programmes flourished through extra-mural departments of universities and different forms of community adult education.

However, with increasing pressures to accredit extra-mural courses, Departments of Adult Continuing Education are likely to become increasingly mainstreamed and may experience challenges to their more radical aims. This could affect the flexible and non-hierarchical nature of many Women's Studies programmes.

This paper will consider these issues in the context of feminist debates around the problematic nature of Women's Studies and formal higher education structures. I also refer to the work of radical adult educators such as Paulo Freire and his commitment to the notion of 'education as the practice of freedom - as opposed to education as the practice of domination'; and Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart and their perspectives on the relationship between adult education and social change. Finally, I draw on my experience as a Women's Studies tutor co-ordinating programmes including an MSc (Econ) in Women's Studies through a Department of Adult Continuing Education.

Women's Studies and adult education: What is the relationship?

In considering the relationship between adult education and Women's Studies, I argue that University Departments of Adult Continuing Education may have provided suitable locations for such courses, although this could change as adult and continuing education becomes increasingly mainstreamed within universities. This is for several reasons.

First, Women's Studies and Adult Education share similar roots in social movements with the former emerging out of a major twentieth century social movement: the women's movement. As Renate Klein puts it:

> "It is important to remember that Women's Studies came into being as the educational arm of the Women's Liberation Movement." (Klein, 1991: 75)

Many feminist teachers and students see Women's Studies is part of a wider movement for radical change in women's lives. Similarly, many adult educators see their work in the context of social change and adult education has traditionally enjoyed close relationships with social movements, in particular with the trade union movement. (Simon, 1990) As Raymond Williams observes:

"the central ambition of the process which was eventually called Adult Education was to be part of the process of social change itself" (Williams, 1989: 157).

As a result, the process of adult education often incorporates a wider commitment to equal opportunities and targeting students who have been traditionally under-represented in higher education . For this reason, I find little conflict in my roles as adult educator and Women's Studies tutor, whilst for reasons considered later the roles of mainstream higher education and Women's Studies tutor are more likely to be contradictory.

Secondly, the non-accredited, 'liberal adult education' tradition enabled the development of radical, innovative approaches in areas such as Cultural and Women's Studies. Within our extra-mural programme we were able to consult with students about course syllabi in ways which are not always feasible within traditional undergraduate and post-graduate programmes. This democratic process could become less available as most university adult education courses become accredited in line with funding requirements. One view is that as adult education becomes mainstreamed, we might see more radical innovation in the higher education curriculum. A less optimistic view is that the curriculum will become less innovative to conform to traditional higher education conventions. This second view reminds me of Williams' observation that the incorporation of English Studies into the mainstream at Cambridge during the early 1920s converted the syllabus into a conventional academic course:

"At the very moment when that adventurous syllabus became a syllabus that had to be examined, it ceased to be exciting" (Williams, 1989 (a): 156).

In accrediting liberal adult education, will our Women's Studies programmes be similarly affected?

Third, adult education shares with Women's Studies .a tradition of interdisciplinarity which challenges conventional notions of what constitutes academic knowledge. By inter-disciplinarity, I refer to programmes in which separate subject disciplines become closely integrated. Subject barriers are broken down and tutors may work in fundamentally different ways as they move from an individualised to a more collective way of working. This approach emerged in the 1960s when adult educators such as Williams, Hoggart and Thompson combined Marxist sociology, social history, textual analysis and literary criticism into what is termed Cultural Studies. (Steele, 1989) Similarly, in the 1970s, Women's Studies courses were developed through a merging of academic disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, literary theory and philosophy. Such courses challenge both the organisation of subject disciplines in higher education and a curriculum content which has often rendered women's experience invisible.

Finally, central to Women's Studies is the theorisation of women's experience. A course of this nature is likely, therefore, to be more relevant to mature women students who can bring their own experiences into the academy. Moreover, the experiential nature of Women's Studies relates closely to the recognition amongst adult educators that a good adult education curriculum should draw on student experience. This approach emerged from the early teaching of Cultural Studies and Women's Studies.

Paulo Freire and 'Education for Freedom'

Radical adult education is also influenced by the Freirean notion of social change. Although Freire's work is based upon his experience of Brazil and Chile, his notion of 'education for freedom' and visions of social transformation has relevance for adult and feminist educators elsewhere. Space does not allow me to explore fully Freire's thought and any feminist critique. However, I identify some elements of Freirean and feminist thinking.

Freire argues that education is never neutral: it must reflect a particular view of the world. He maintains that education has traditionally instilled conformity into the young through a process he describes as 'domestication'. Freire aims to identify how an alternative 'education for freedom' can be achieved. Hence, his primary interest is in constructing educational alternatives through which there can be new forms of consciousness emerging as participants become aware of the nature of the world and act to transform it. Freire maintains that a condition for liberation is an educational practice which actively creates political consciousness. Hence, any social revolution must involve new forms of education. Central to this education is the transformation of the teacher/student relationship with the teacher becoming learner and vice versa:

"The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow" (Freire, 1972: 53).

Hence the roles of teachers as knowers and students as learners becomes obscured and the right of the teacher to define the learning process is challenged.

Whilst feminist writers note Freire's lack of reference to gender and his persistent use of sexist language in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, they also recognise the parallels in feminist and Freirean thinking. In one important feminist critique of Freire, Weiler (1991) argues that feminists and Freireans share similar liberatory goals. Both are committed to justice and have visions of social transformation based on certain assumptions about oppression, consciousness and social change. Moreover, both challenge traditional Western knowledge systems.

Weiler notes that Freire's ideas emerge from his experience of the developing world in which he saw oppression in terms of class and in the context of peasants' and working peoples' revolutionary struggles. According to Weiler, he does not address specific oppressions or analyse ways in which individuals may experience oppression in one sphere whilst becoming the oppressor in another. For example, the man oppressed by his boss may oppress his wife, or the white woman oppressed by sexism may oppress the black woman. This has implications for an 'education for freedom' which aims to achieve a collective knowledge and action. Weiler asks, 'But what if that experience is divided? What if different truths are discovered?' (Weiler, 1991: 453) These observations have implications for liberatory pedagogies in that one cannot assume a common experience or a common sense of oppression within the classroom.

Weiler also notes that the feminist vision of the teacher's authority echoes the Freirean notion of the teacher as joint learner with students whilst recognising an element of teacher 'authority' based on the greater knowledge of the latter and also respecting the knowledge and experience of the student. The issue of 'authority' is problematic and cannot be explicated here. For example Weiler's suggestion that a feminist teacher's acceptance of authority can be liberating to her and her students needs to be explored further. Nevertheless, Freirean and feminist pedagogy share a commitment to non-hierarchical teacher/student relationships and this model has formed part of the culture of informal adult education.

A Women's Studies MSc (Econ) in a Department of Adult Continuing Education

In the light of my consideration of the relationship between Adult Education and Women's Studies, I consider our practical experience of running an MSc (Econ) in Women's Studies. The move away from a 'liberal education' model has created tensions between the non-hierarchical aims of feminist scholarship, in particular in relation to the 'authority' of the teacher who must, for example, define curricula and grade students' work.

In line with much adult education practice we aim to offer an academic programme within an equal opportunities framework and our target groups include non-traditional students who are under-represented in higher education. We aim to move beyond disciplinary boundaries through multi-disciplinarity or inter-disciplnarity. Finally, we aim to encourage students to theorise personal experience in an academic context.

Establishing standards

The tutor team spent considerable time addressing the issue of standards. This became important partly because of the perceptions of some that Women's Studies is an 'easy' degree or 'not a real university subject', partly to enable the programme to establish a positive reputation but also to ensure that the considerable effort exerted by students would not be devalued.

We established our standards through advice offered by the external examiner and consultations with colleagues involved in other Masters' programmes. I remain mindful, however, that our pre-occupation with standards and grading criteria may conflict with feminist and Freirean notions of education as consciousness raising in which teacher and students are equals. How do we reconcile the valuing of students' experiences and perspectives with the grading of that experience? Or how do we reconcile our role as assessors of student achievement with the Freirean notion that both teachers and learners are '...simultaneously teachers and students.' (Freire, 1972: 46).

What has emerged is the way in which the standards issue impacts on key elements of the Masters' programme, in particular equal opportunities and the experiential nature of Women's Studies.

Equal opportunities

There are inevitable tensions between our equal opportunities strategy of offering places to non-traditional students who may be non-graduates and the need to offer a course which is academically 'acceptable'. Many such students may not have absorbed the traditions of academic discourse and can experience considerable difficulty in dealing with an area of study which can be highly theoretical. They may feel that the programme actually invalidates their voice. How have we resolved this tension?

In many respects the tension is still ever-present in the programme. Nevertheless, we have not compromised in terms of course content. If an area of knowledge which is difficult to grasp is an important element of current thinking within Women's Studies, it is included in the curriculum. However, we offer students maximum support such as study skills and small group/individual tutorials in demystifying these complex areas. In the process of accrediting extra-mural courses, we aim to build a part-time progression route into the Masters' degree by offering a Certificate in Women's Studies. (the equivalent standard to Part One undergraduate) We envisage that by studying for the Certificate, non-traditional students will be better prepared for post-graduate study.

Nevertheless, in refusing to compromise in terms of course content and in assuming the role of arbiters in terms of the nature of important current perspectives within Women's Studies, we are clearly in conflict with the spirit of Freirean and feminist notions of scholarship. Yet in seeking credibility as a post-graduate programme, it is probable that institutional notions of an 'appropriate' curriculum will be prioritised more highly than alternative, liberatory definitions. This is not to suggest that these institutional definitions cannot be challenged but that the institution has the greater power to define 'knowledge' than students.

Personal experience

A second tension is between the experiential nature of Women's Studies (as with other elements of the Adult Education Curriculum) and traditional academic approaches which tend to be non-experiential. Students often receive contradictory messages in terms of the validity of their experience. (Morely, 1993) So, despite the centrality of women's experience to Women's Studies, one woman's experience cannot be used to generalise all women's experience. Moreover, the use of personal experience in assessed work is only likely to be acceptable on a postgraduate programme if couched within the language of academic discourse.

In many respects, this is a problem which may be unresolvable within academe: experience will always be both central and invalid! However, examination with students of many of these contradictions can provide a useful educational experience in itself. We have therefore included consideration of the relationship between Women's Studies and personal experience in the course. This is one way in which it may be possible to develop a feminist and Freirean notion of 'education for freedom' within the academy: by tutors and students engaging in a joint analysis of the tensions between liberatory aims and the process of incorporation into the academic mainstream. Through this analysis, both teacher and student can jointly reach an understanding of the constraints of the academy.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I have considered the relationship between adult education and Women's Studies and their shared commitment to social transformation and radical change within conventional academic institutions. I have looked briefly at Freire's notion of liberatory education and its potential for feminist pedagogy. Finally, I consider the MSc (Econ) in Women's Studies offered through the Department of Adult Continuing

Education in Swansea and suggest that there are conflicts between the radical agenda of Women's Studies and the offering of such a curriculum through post-graduate study. Similarly, the shift from an informal liberal adult education to an accredited and mainstreamed programme will pose tensions. Whether we find our curriculum and practices becoming more traditional as a result of mainstreaming or whether we manage to successfully challenge traditional academic practice is yet to be seen. Certainly the tensions are unlikely to be resolved in the near future. Nevertheless, there is the potential for the very existence of these tensions to support a creative questioning about the role of adult education and Women's Studies within the academic mainstream.

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Living with competence : certificate in education programmes and the inclusion of national standards

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This paper argues that it is possible to work with National Standards in post-compulsory teacher training programmes, without compromising critical reflectivity and theoretical understanding. Starting with an outline of some relevant recent developments and a brief review of some major criticisms and objections to NVQ formulations of competence, I then go on to suggest that, as expressions of desired workplace performance, TDLB standards can be juxtaposed with other attempts at expressing what the nature of professional competence in teaching might be. If they are taken as expressions of competence at its 'performance end', they can therefore be presented as just that and they can be contrasted with attempts to formulate what might be desired 'inner' processes and capacities in teachers. TDLB Standards can serve as a guide to if not the basis of certain assessments, without their taking over the actual course process which can remain concentrated on reflective and reflexive understanding of teaching processes.

If Training and Development Lead Body (TDLB) Standards are not (at the moment at least) to be seen as the entire basis of assessment in Certificate in Education programmes for the post-compulsory sector, why bother with them at all? Firstly, there are a number of pragmatic reasons for working with the Standards. The Education Lead Body was given the go-ahead last year (TES 18/11/94) to begin work on Standards for Further Education and shortly afterwards invitations to tender for the initial occupational mapping of the sector appeared in the press. TDLB also published its revised Standards at about the same time and announced that it expected a period of about five years of stability. There is some evidence that FE employers are beginning to look to more than the assessor units when producing job specifications, with some recent advertisements asking for 'C' units (trainer competences). It is unlikely that the occupational mapping of FE will ignore the work that TDLB has already done. Regarding Higher Education, there is a noticeable shift in the Employment Department's Standards Programme towards the development of Higher Level NVQs and GNVQs and the introduction of NVQs into the current HE curriculum with 'bolt-on' units. This development, partly a recognition that "HE is different ", points the way towards various kinds of compromise or interim arrangements when we consider that the relationship between Employment Department and HE will no doubt develop further. Finally, another pragmatic argument for using Standards in Certificate in Education programmes is that they offer experiential opportunities to teacher-students who are or will be required to teach competence-based programmes. Clearly, those experiences could range from good to bad (or from bad to worse), yet they offer the opportunity to get personal insights into what it feels like to be on a GNVQ or NVQ programme and to avoid some of the excesses of the NVQ version of assessing competence (such as the tendency to atomise assessment into unit-by-unit or element-by-element activity, either by the assessor in setting up assessment activities or by the candidate when presenting the evidence). Thus, the experience of working with TDLB units in a Certificate in Education programme can be used to exploit to the full the dual nature of the teacher training experience : the course members are both teachers and students and insights gained from reflection on their experiences in the 'student' role can be immediately transferred to an examination of their own working practices.

These pragmatic reasons, however, are far from satisfactory on their own, echoing as they do a " we're here because we're here " mentality. Given that the pragmatic reasons are compelling and probably inescapable - the realities of the 'market' which has been constructed in Further and Higher Education are such that we either implicate ourselves in such developments or we give way to others who are less troubled by them - what can be done to ensure that critical reflectivity, theoretical understanding and a general reflexivity do not give way under the onslaught of evidence gathering and portfolio indexing, under the time-consuming and numbing pressure of having to 'prove' that you do everything correctly?

The infiltration of an industrial or managerial discourse into the educational world has been observed for some time now, with, for example Holt (1987) and Gleeson (1989) looking at an earlier phase of the vocationalisation of the school and post-compulsory curriculum with YT and TVEI. Becher (1984) detected the beginnings of managerial cultures and structures of control in education and training institutions, focused upon the increasing collection of quantitative measures of achievement or output. The application of accountancy measures occasioned by the Audit Commission's (1985) demands for efficiency gains in the FE system have culminated in the Recurrent Funding Methodology (FEFC, 1994) with its emphasis on business planning and output related funding. The instrumentalist linking of training with better returns on the investment of capital is a continual Employment Department theme : " As improved capital enhances the efficiency of the workforce, a better trained workforce improves the return on capital." (ED, 1993). This linking of industrial performance and training is clearly there in the NVQ formulation of competence with its emphasis on performance to the standards expected by employers. Whilst a broad notion of competence has been envisaged, for example in the 'Job Competence Model' (Fennell, 1991), the inevitable focusing upon performance in the workplace which is central to the NCVQ definition tends to consign the wider aspects to a kind of vagueness typified by the following extract:

"Competence is conceived as being much broader than specifications of skill as has existed in traditional training programmes. Competence should incorporate all that is required to perform effectively in employment, which includes managing competing demands within a work role, interpersonal relationships and so on." (Jessup, 1989: 75)

There is a technocratic optimism in the writings of the advocates of the NCVQ and Employment Department Standards Methodology Unit which leads to a denigration of traditional forms of assessment :

"What a manager or receptionist or technician does when working is likely to tell us more about their achievement against standards than any test of theory or knowledge." (Mathews 1991: 6)

There is also more than a hint of what Foucault (1979) termed the "new describability" of the modern age in which power accrues to specialists who are able to constitute subjects through the development of bodies of knowledge which describe new notions of normality. In the case of the NVQ system and the Standards programme, a total system for Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications has been designed which depends very much upon the observation of people and examination of evidence against a publicly available set of norms which are seen by advocates to be comprehensive :

"The methodology is still emerging and very few people have thought before in such detail about what they require of people performance in particular functions" (Mathews, 1991:11)

Indeed, it can be argued that standards are not fundamentally concerned with improving practices but with ensuring conformity to set procedures, or at least that improvement and conformity have been conflated. As a means of ensuring conformity, NVQs can be described in terms of the three main power techniques proposed by Foucault : discipline, training and surveillance. Foucault characterises modern power techniques as complex, subtle and impersonal :

"... anonymous instruments of power, coextensive with the multiplicity that they regiment, such as hierarchical surveillance, continuous registration, perpetual assessment and classification." (Foucault, 1979: 220)

Power is seen as insidious and pervasive, objectifying its subjects whilst constituting them as subjects through discourses which present those practices, beliefs and behaviours to be abandoned or avoided as abnormal, irrational or dangerous. An example from the NVQ discourse would be that which articulates the 'obvious' superiority of criterion-reference testing of performance over the norm-referencing of the 'educational model' (e.g. Jessup, 1989; NCVQ, 1988). The hierarchical and panoptical features of NVQ quality assurance with its emphasis on conformity to the correct administrative procedures are of course echoed in the standards which NVQ assessors and verifiers must achieve, thus providing a powerful normative device through a form of self-discipline. Achieving the standards indicates that you have achieved a level of self-regulation which indicates (at least temporarily) that you accept the discipline of the new regime. Waters (1994) refers to this modern tendency to move away from external means of control towards greater emphasis on self-regulation as "the inversion of disciplinary orientations", an aspect of the NVQ system which has also been noted by Edwards and Usher (1994). As noted by Marshall (1992) the sites of power in a power-knowledge system are also sites of potential conflict and this is certainly the case with the NVQ notion of what constitutes competence and how competence is to be assessed. Edwards and Usher (1994) also note the seductive linkage of NVQs with liberal or humanistic practices such as individualised programmes, learner-self-direction and action planning aspects of what Collins (1991) has called the "ideology of technique" which he sees as dominating the professionalisation of adult education since the 1960s. Indeed some of Collins' summative remarks on competence-based learning could serve as the basis for encouraging a degree of reflexivity within training courses, for example :

"They are characterised largely by a myopic perspective on needs typically expressed in the form of behavioural objectives. Thus management interests are well served, education and training programmes are trivialised, while occupations are increasingly de-skilled through the deployment of narrowly defined prescriptions."(Collins, 1991: 90)

Collins is analysing a discourse of andragogy which he sees as debilitating to the life-world mainly because of its taken-for-granted acceptance. The link with managerialism in education is easily detected through the language shared by these preoccupations : learning is now 'managed' and 'delivered' ; students are 'customers' or the 'market'; qualifications are 'products'; the curriculum is a " delivery system and teachers [have] become its technicians or operatives " (Ball, 1992:154). The taken-for-granted element of discourse, whether it be the new NCVQ dominated discourse, or the 'educational' discourses which preceded it is a central issue here. A Certificate in Education programme which had an underlying training emphasis would no doubt present its discourse in this taken-for-granted way : this is what good teachers are; this is what they do and this is how you do it. Now it could be argued that to present a Certificate in Education programme which encourages critical reflectivity (part of a current discourse which, some would say inaccurately, presents Schon's (1983) notions of reflection in and on action as the basis of good teacher training) and presents theoretical understanding as essential to good practice (perhaps also based on a notion such as " there's nothing more practical than a good theory ") is enough to expect from teacher-students at this stage in their professional development. It would be easy, for example, to argue that many teacher-students in the post-compulsory system arrive at their courses with the myopic perspective that Collins alludes to, or that the obsession with performance and technique is already there and must be dealt with before the participants can move onto the luxury of standing back and asking " what's going on here ? " It could also be argued that many teacher trainers are too closely locked inside a discourse of teaching and learning to be able to present alternatives. Finally, it could be said that to require reflexivity of the kind being suggested is surely post-graduate level work.

However, the suggestion is that reflexivity can be encouraged experientially through the juxtaposition of at least two paradigms within the same programme, one of which being TDLB standards and the NVQ model, the other being the model upon which the Institution has based its validated course. For example, a validated modular course would consist of modules of learning with the usual descriptive components - outcomes, content, mode of delivery, assessment and bibliography. Some module assessments might not be dissimilar from the equivalent TDLB requirements in that the assessment evidence would consist of performance or product evidence (for example, a portfolio of support materials). Other assessments might require the kind of evidence which has been consigned to the category of 'supplementary evidence' in the NVQ model, such as reports, commentaries and critical analyses. What all the assessments in this modular scheme would have in common, however, is that the assessment criteria would written at a general level and would not have the same rigidity that is to be found in the NVQ approach (all performance criteria must be evidenced). In addition modules could be identified with TDLB units and teacher-students could opt to take TDLB units if they wished to do so. This is now familiar practice with the assessor units, but here the scope would be much greater and could lead to dual accreditation to TDLB mini-awards or to full awards at Level 3 or 4. Within such an arrangement the modules would provide a more theoretical backdrop to TDLB units and the relationship between the module and TDLB requirements would have to be made explicit and therefore prompt immediate comparisons - why is it that we ask the teacher-students to try to describe the motivational levels in a group and to explain changes in the group dynamics in terms of theoretical constructs, when the equivalent TDLB unit asks only for performance evidence that appropriate techniques were used to develop a positive atmosphere and constructive relationships? Comparisons would inevitably be made at many other points and therefore a dialogue enabled which revolves around the teacher-students' experience of the course process and their own notions of what professional competence amounts to in relation to the assessment demands made upon them by the contrasting assessment regimes. Even those who do not opt for any TDLB accreditation would not fail to be aware of the contrasting regimes and the experiences of colleagues who were opting for some degree of dual accreditation.

In this way, the "rituals of truth" (Foucault, 1979:194) around which different education and training paradigms revolve could be examined, contrasted and challenged through the direct experience of participants.

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Where has Schon led us? The impact of 'The Reflective Practitioner' upon nurse education, practice and research

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Introduction

In the 12 years since the publication of Schon's *The Reflective Practitioner*, and its 1987 sequel *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*, nurse education has undergone radical change. It is the intention of this paper to submit a critical account of the emergence of this 'reflective philosophy' from the perspective of a nurse educator who, following a 3-year span overseas, returned to discover that 'reflective practice' had become topical. Indeed Jarvis (1992) suggested it might be a 'bandwagon', whilst Lauder (1994) likened it to the pursuit of The Holy Grail! The paper will consider why the concept of the 'reflective practitioner' has become such an influential model for the profession, questioning not only 'Where has Schon led us?', but perhaps more significantly, how and why have we responded? In undertaking this review, it is hoped that SCUTREA participants will assess the extent to which these comments bear similarity to their own experience and domains of practice.

It will be suggested that Schon's work was timely, providing a legitimised tool to a group who were seeking status in the professional market place and required a 'frame' or 'stance' from which to operate. *The Reflective Practitioner* had been endorsed by the educational sector, was metaphorically attractive and could facilitate a developmental process already in motion. Furthermore, Schon's work seemed to complement that of Benner (1984) which sought to elicit the 'knowledge embedded in expertise'. The present challenge to the profession is to assimilate and modify those aspects that are compatible with the practice of nursing; to generate alternative frames where appropriate; and to reject influences which may hinder the development of nursing practitioners, the profession and possibly adversely effect patients.

The paper will begin by locating the discussion within the context of contemporary British Nursing and its burgeoning literature on 'reflective practice'.

A nursing context

The period 1983 to 1995 has been a highly prolific and active time for nursing, with the launch of 'Project 2000' (UKCC[1], 1986), which ensured Diplomate status accompanied professional registration . Whilst the 1986 report had no mention of Schon or 'Reflective practice', there were clear intentions to move nursing towards a more student and adult centred pedagogy with the preparation of a practitioner who would be: (1) a 'knowledgeable doer:' a 'thinking person with analytical skills' not removed from practice but one who gave care and (2) a life long learner requiring a 'coherent, comprehensive and cost effective framework of education beyond registration' (UKCC, 1986: 51). The profession was advised to seek contact with other educational colleagues so that further critical discussion could be pursued: a point reaffirmed by the ENB[2] (1994) when they stipulated that pre registration programmes should 'reflect contemporary educational thinking'. Indeed projects commissioned to evaluate Project

2000 and to investigate Continuing Professional Education (CPE) were often directed by, or included, general educators (e.g. Fish, Purr, Rogers, Shostak, Phillips, Miller). It is from many of these reports that the theme of 'reflection' is emphasised. 1992 saw the beginnings of a revolution in CPE as flexible modular programmes incorporating academic and professional qualifications were introduced, often accompanied by Accreditation Schemes (APL/APEL). Concomitant with these events was the economic recession and the market led changes in the public services that influenced not only the labour market in nursing, but also the 'culture ' of education, training, practice and research, including the commencement of National Vocational Qualifications in Care. Throughout this period, sustained efforts continued to implement the vision of 1986, and so nurse education moves into the Higher Education Sector, and mandatory updating incorporating the concept of self verification commences this year. Self verification will be achieved through the compilation of personal profiles, which the UKCC explained to practitioners, would be "created by a continuing process which involves reflecting on and recording what you learn from everyday experiences as well as from planned learning activities" (Fact Sheet 4, 1995). This statement reveals the assumption that practitioners can and will document their learning experiences through 'reflection'. Indeed it illustrates James and Clarke's (1994) point that reflective practice may redirect the responsibility for professional development from the organisation to the practitioner: potentially a cost effective strategy .

Towards the reflective practitioner?

An early reference to 'reflection' maybe found in ENB guidelines for the first Project 2000 curricula, which stated that all students should be enabled to 'communicate with sensitivity, observe with understanding, reflect with insight and participate in the delivery of care with knowledge and skill' (ENB, 1989:8). However it is only students preparing to be mental health or paediatric nurses who were required to have opportunities to reflect within a 'guided dynamic practical experience' (paediatric) or, 'a supportive environment' (mental health) (ENB, 1989). In contrast, the most recent guidelines for pre registration curricula state that:

Reflection in and on practice is an essential component of pre registration programmes and qualified practitioners continue to develop the skills of reflective practice through continuing education. (ENB, 1994:13)

Thus within the space of a decade, the professional bodies have moved from seeking to develop a 'knowledgeable doer', to preparing 'reflective practitioners': that is practitioners able to use reflection to learn from their experiences (Jarvis 1992). Whilst there is no reference to Schon or reflective practice in Rogers and Lawrence's (1987) examination of CPE, by 1991 Larcombe and Maggs cite the works of Schon, Benner and Houle to support their recommendation that practitioners and their employers should define periods when reflection on practice should take place. They also asserted that a key characteristic of the development of a profession is the development of the reflective practitioner. Work into CPE (Fish and Purr, 1991, Orme, 1992) and the Diploma programmes, (White et al, 1993, Shostak and Phillips, 1993) drew attention to the need to prepare practice based

supervisors in the techniques of debriefing, reflection and the supervision of practice. Shostak and Phillips advocated that assessment of students should provide continuity of reflective practice based upon the collection of evidence, they considered that the fully competent student is the one who:
can move from situated thinking and planning whilst doing (reflection in action), weighing alternatives and taking decisions across a wide range of contexts (reflection on action), it is necessary to develop processes which promote both the analysis and critique that moves from the particular to the general and back again.
This description illustrates one of Greenwood's (1993) criticisms of Schon, namely that he neglected the importance of reflection before action: the intentional aspects of propositional behaviours and practical reasoning: indeed Lauder (1994) argued that Aristotle's practical syllogism maybe more apt. Schon's exemplars did not resemble practises where there is considerable emotional labour, interaction, and tension within institutional settings like nursing. However, Schon (1983, 1987) articulated that he had not addressed either the teaching of the applied sciences and the reflective practicum; or the professional within the institutional bureaucracy: settings in which most nurses currently operate. The ENB (1994) recognising the importance of the institution advocated a cultural shift towards developing the 'learning organisations' described by Argyris and Schon (1978). They state that these organisations require a commitment to encourage reflective practice and clinical supervision: factors considered to be essential to professional education. Jarvis (1992) asserted that no profession can be said to have reflective practice as a claim, although a professional group may endeavour to provide the structures and frameworks which foster reflective practice. Whilst Schon offered little practical guidance on teaching strategies which may promote reflection, this gap has been filled by the emergence of 'models of structured or guided reflection' (e.g. Fish, Johns, Gibbs), frequently accompanied by established learning tools, for example journal keeping, critical incident analysis, and experiential techniques. These techniques are the tool box of the educator, but can they be reasonably expected of practitioners, students and their practice based supervisors who in some case have only 12 month's seniority?

Similarities, differences, influences and criticisms

The benefits attributed to reflective practice enables one to ascertain why it has been appropriated by the profession. Reflection is considered to be essential to learning, having the capacity to reduce the theory practice gap, promote critical thinking and improve practice. Through the empowerment and development of individuals, reflection may be perceived as a vehicle for enhancing altruistic notions of service, whilst furthering an occupational goal of professional status, in which an oro-practical tradition seeks legitimacy for its discourse and knowing. Whilst the validity of these claims has been challenged by authors like Greenwood (1993), Lauder (1994), Newell (1992), and James and Clarke (1994), the move towards developing 'reflective practitioners' seems inexorable. Usher (1992) discussed how Schon's work enabled practitioners to have an alternative discourse to examine and recreate work. Reflective exercises may thus facilitate practitioner development, perhaps along the 'reflective spectrum' mentioned by Day (1993), revealing theories in use and a body of nursing knowledge/ knowing. Is this when Plato's 'right opinion' becomes knowledge, tethered by the approbation of public scrutiny and delivered by the midwife called 'reflection'? However, when practitioners 'tell their stories', they may engage their espoused theories rather than those in use (Greenwood, 1993). Similarly they may be influenced by the effects of anxiety, memory and hindsight bias (Jones, 1995). I would contend that, at present, insufficient attention is being paid to just **what** is being created or recreated through reflection and indeed **which approaches** are 'guiding' these 'creations'. These accounts are often analysed using existing frameworks like Carper's forms of knowing in nursing: frameworks that may transform the 'raw' material. It would be unfortunate if a process that may have the potential to articulate a nursing discourse, ended up resembling the techno - rational model, rather than revealing the 'embedded' knowledge.

In revisiting Schon, I discover significant differences between Schon's illustrative examples and the contexts in which I have operated. These differences include: the students, the coaches and the demands placed upon this 'reflective practitioner'. Argyris and Schon's students were either post graduates or students of the graduate professional schools who had 'volunteered' for the scenarios described. The coaches like Quist were 'expert practitioners' but presumably were not also qualified educators, nor (apart from the psychotherapy vignette) supervisors in the workplace. The settings were virtual practica similar to practice, predominantly dealing with inanimate thus enabling immediate replay of the scenario in the action present, i.e. the studio and music classes. The curricula differ in respect to the balance, sequence, and role of theory and practical experience. It is also assumed that the reflective practitioner is competent, having the attributes of a Model 2 person. In pursuing this 'model' person, the profession is possibly overlooking Schon's comments that he did not consider how in practice the individual could afford to be a Model 2 person at all times. Discussions about the reflective practitioner, 'reflection', and learning, reveal assumptions that the process 'must involve the self and lead to a changed perspective' (Atkins and Murphy, 1993) and, in the context of teaching, that 'confrontation either by self or others must occur' if professional development is to be enhanced (Day, 1993). This debate shows that these assumptions concern not only an individual's capacity and consent to accept change or challenge, but also the educator or supervisor's right to initiate these processes. These issues substantiate James and Clarke 's (1994) remarks that Schon's account offered little discussion of the moral and ethical dimensions to reflective practice.

Where are we going?

Answering this question, I find myself faced with two different avenues, one leads through genuine empowerment to 'fresh pastures' as yet unknown, whilst the other returns to an 'old' destination by a different route. It has been demonstrated that the professional bodies and the N.H.S have articulated a commitment towards developing 'learning organisations,' 'reflective practice' and 'supervision'. Whilst applauding the attributes, I have questioned the general applicability of the 'reflective practice model', given the constraints of practice, the settings, and the present non graduate status of nursing. The role of professional education is thus seen to be quite critical: it needs to be responsive to the similarities and differences found in the various professional groups: celebrating the richness and diversity of practises, whilst sharing common ground through collaborative ventures. When celebrating the 'Golden Anniversary' of SCUTREA, it is hoped that someone will be able to describe the journey to the 'unknown pasture'.

Notes

1. UKCC. United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting.

2. ENB. English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting

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Using a self-selected support group as a strategy for survival

Christine Hibbert, Antoinette Middling and Frances Scourfield

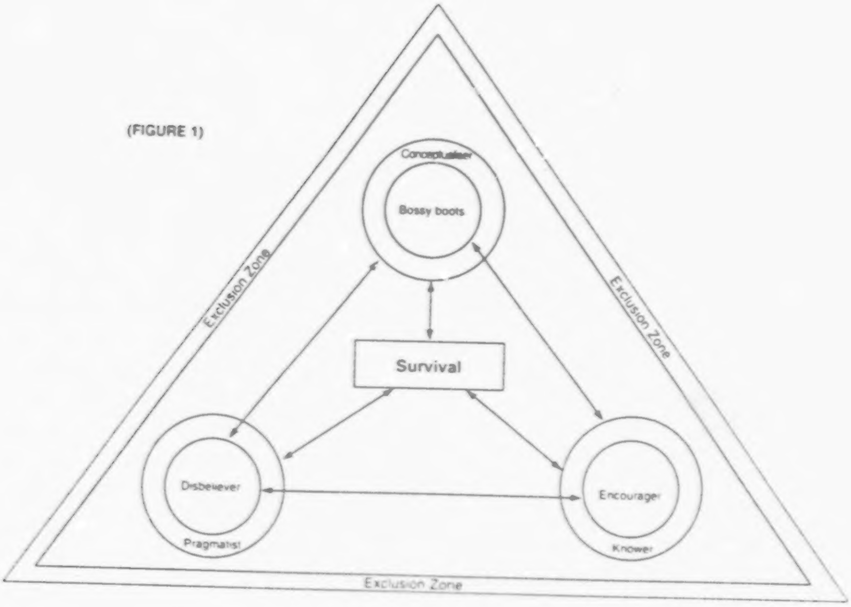
The aim of this paper is to discuss the interaction of the roles, responsibilities and dependency associated with a self selected support group. This took place in the dissertation year of a Masters in Continuing Education course. This discussion will be undertaken using three specific areas. They are the context of the group, the processes used and the importance of the dawning recognition that this was a survival strategy and a life changing experience.

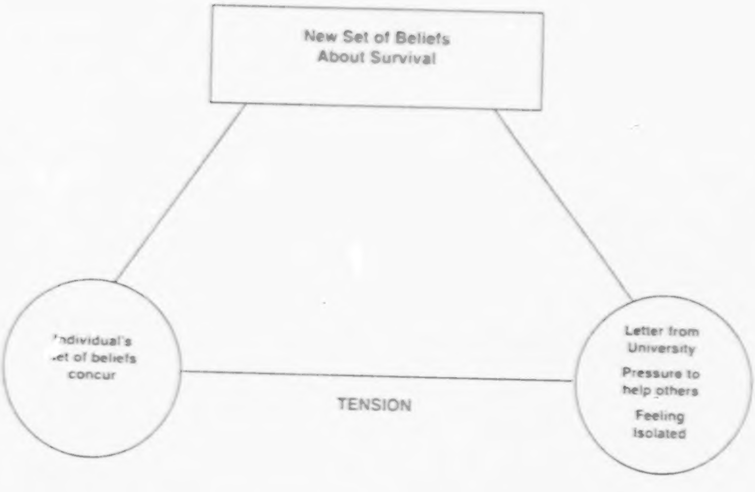
There are three people involved in both the support group and the writing of this paper. The joint collaboration to write a paper was very different from the original intention of the support group. We only knew that we worked well together although our learning styles and approaches to completing the task were very different. We also recognized that to survive we had a need to exclude others from the group. This will be further discussed later in the paper. In reviewing the experience on completion of the original task and then with more depth for writing the paper there was an echo to be found in the work of Kasl, Dechant and Marsick (1993: 54). They identify the fact that if a group sets itself up to achieve a task, the main focus of attention is the completion of that task. They also suggest that there may be a nodding acquaintance with the process by which the task is achieved; this, however, is of less significance. What we had done was set ourselves another and very different task. The dilemmas this created have only recently come to light in that we now believe this is not the case for this experience. The superficial process was perhaps one of the most important areas of which we were conscious. It might be appropriate at this point to identify what those differences were in relation to the common aim and the roles taken on by each of the group members. A tentative model has been developed to explain this strategy for survival more succinctly (see Figure 1). It is acknowledged at this point that it has not yet been tested.

In explanation of the model, the central concept and most important factor was the need to survive this year and successfully achieve the task. The topic areas and therefore the supervisors were different and at the time this seemed to be of no significance in the selection of the group. The significant point was the recognition that we already knew that our styles were different and yet still chose to work with each other.

The first group member had an approach to the task that involved commencing work immediately, editing and re-editing work until the final draft was satisfactory. She had a way of conceptualizing problems and issues and broadening the discussion to involve new trains of thought and totally different ways of approaching the task. On the other hand she also had an ability to act as organizer and 'bossy boots' when requested. She agreed to set times and dates for completion of work to enable the other group members to use her as a motivator for deadlines. The unusual element in all of this is that these two roles seem to be totally opposed to each other and yet both seemed too important in the completion of the task.

(FIGURE 1)


Conceptualiser
Bossy boots
Exclusion Zone
Exclusion Zone
Survival
Disbeliever
Pragmatist
Encourager
Knower
Exclusion Zone


New Set of Beliefs
About Survival
Individual's
set of beliefs
concur
TENSION
Letter from
University
Pressure to
help others
Feeling
Isolated

(FIGURE 2)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The second group member edited to a lesser extent but still needed to write and re-draft. She was also what we called the disbeliever in that theory and academia were constantly challenged and questioned. Therefore, when the other two members of the group started to conceptualize and wallow in theory, the bubble was burst. There was a refreshing sense of it is OK to challenge and disagree, in fact to disbelieve. On the other hand once this had occurred the disbeliever was then the one who brought a sense of getting on with the task. She demonstrated time and again that she had integrated the theoretical concepts so well they become hidden in expertise (Dreyfus, cited by Benner 1984:32). There was also a sense that this person brought the group back to reality by recognizing and reminding others that there was life outside this task. She reminded us that to survive we needed to remember this.

The third group member had a style that involved doing the major part of the task in her head. This was organized in a logical order and then written as a final draft towards the end of the deadline. This involved almost constantly living with the work and using quiet moments to sort the order cognitively. She had an ability to encourage and inspire the other group members. The encourager reminded the other group members why they had started first and what the outcome would be at the end. There was a sense of vision about success or survival that was unswerving. She was also a knower in that previous learning and experience meant that a resource was available cognitively to point the other group members in the right direction.

The arrows on the diagram indicate the relationships among the three group members. These roles were not used sequentially or in any particular pattern that could be identified, and this seemed interesting in itself. For example you would expect to use the conceptualizer at the beginning and the knower during the literature review; this was not the case. All six roles were used at varying times and immaterial of the stage at which work was produced. Looking at the model it could be said that an integration of all the roles seems to make up what could be considered the ideal learner.

The exclusion zone was born out of desperation in that there was a feeling that we would not survive and complete the task. We were not quite sure why. However, on reflection, some of it was related to our work areas where, as facilitators of adult education we could not be drawn into the support role at the cost of our own task. Also, without quite knowing why we knew that would not happen within the self selected group.

The reflection process started when the group met after the successful completion of the task to celebrate the survival. There also seemed to be a need to not end a successful strategy and an important lifeline at difficult times. What started as an informal discussion became formal when we started to identify critical incidents. This was within the context of the previous two years of the course and related to incidents that meant that we self-select a support group that became crucial to our survival. This kind of reflection technique is suggested by Benner (1984:300).

Through conscious reflection we began to examine why we self-selected. There then came a dawning recognition that significant reflections and incidents that were perceived as individual, were, in fact, common to all three members. Using the guidelines suggested by Benner (1984:302) we identified that our moral reasoning was based on very similar ethical principles. These are outlined by Beauchamp and Childress (1989). Perhaps the best way to describe this connection is to identify the critical incidents and connect them to the principles. It must be acknowledged here that there is criticism of the use of principlism (Danner Clouser and Gert 1990); however it is not within the scope of this paper to argue this point.

The first critical incident occurred at the start of the three year course when the three group members expressed concern and fear about completing the course and reaching the required standard. This was a significant event as it seemed we were the only course members to verbalize these feelings. All three group members remembered this incident and saw it as a significant step towards successful completion. On reflection other incidents that reinforced this honesty occurred throughout the course and this seemed to come together with upholding the ethical principle of truthfulness or veracity (Beauchamp and Childress, 1989:308).

The next incident occurred when sharing took place amongst participants on the course. It appeared that each of the three members of the group remembered specific instances when resources were promised and did not appear. The only time when there was an exception to this was when information was promised by the three members of the support group. This can be related to the ethical principle of fidelity or promise keeping (Beauchamp and Childress, 1989:341).

The most significant incident that finally cemented the group as a survival group was when we were asked by the course co-ordinator if we wanted or needed help to set up support systems. Interestingly, quite independently of each other we replied negatively, although our response ranged from the formal letter to ignoring it in the hope that nothing would come of it. We then contacted each other to confirm that we had each responded in the same way knowing that this would be so. From an ethical point of view this could be related to the principle of beneficence. Beauchamp and Childress (1989:194) identify that within this principle there is "an obligation to weigh and balance the possible goods against the possible harms of an action." We believe that we acted in this way to prevent harm both to ourselves and each other. It was at this point that we began to recognize that this was about survival and that was not just about ourselves as individuals but also the group of three. We all brought with us our own experiences of life, the course and our professions. All were of ourselves and yet contributed to the whole. It seems that this experience echoes Habermas' description of the three worlds, objective, social and subjective (Habermas, 1984:100).

The last critical incident occurred when two members of the group were contacted by other members of the course asking for assistance. Again there was a negative response to this that was not without difficulty. We were all involved in our professional lives in the facilitation of learning and to step outside this role created a certain tension (See Figure 2). The dialectical relationship of the established ethical beliefs and the request for help that could or would not be met lead to the permission to take care of just ourselves in this set of circumstances. The tension in this position created the new context of our decision to proceed. According to Ross (cited by Gillon 1992:18) when a mature person reflects upon moral obligations in conflict they cannot be "ranked or weighted so that we could know in advance which principles should take precedence over which." Our obligation to ourselves superseded the duty of beneficence.

In effect this cemented the exclusion zone.

In conclusion this exercise has allowed the experience to focus beyond the group and beyond the issue of our own learning, albeit only extending as far as issues connected with our own practice working in the field of adult education. This is supported by Nod Miller in Boud, Cohen and Walker who links the "private and public" worlds and talks about the development of her sociological imagination (Mills, 1970). This writing exercise has enabled the three participants to try and place an essentially individual and personal experience against the context of a professional life that seeks to develop insights and skills to facilitate learning in others. Each of us is changed; each of us has learnt that to survive we need to give ourselves permission to exclude others. Each of us has learnt that we need to help ourselves and that sometimes this is at the cost of our wish to help others.

In asking questions of ourselves it is how we frame those questions that will shape the answers. Van Manen (1990: 1-2) discusses the way one articulates research questions as part of determining the approach to the research being undertaken. It seems likely that this is true of this piece of work. There are questions we have chosen to articulate and discuss. There are also questions that we are aware we have not raised and inevitably there are questions that, as yet we are unaware of: questions that should be asked either collectively or individually.

The writers recognize that this is neither an exhaustive account, nor a tried and tested or fully researched model. However, it is reassuring to accept the approach of Van Manen (1990:7) when he discusses the theory of the unique and dealing with "what is essentially not replaceable."

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Journey through the looking glass: some reflections on crossing the community/higher education divide

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A traveller's tale

A part-time student who works in community education (CE) in Derbyshire recently greeted me with: "The new cuts have been announced and the CECs are going now". A few days before, I had taken a telephone call from a local councillor anticipating this announcement. He had said, "I know you can't do anything about it but you do know what's been going on here. Can you tell people about what we tried to do?".

What had 'been going on' was a unique attempt by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) to implement a policy which combined the two key strands of CE, through local communities and through schools. The policy had evolved from a massive five-year, county-wide, consultation exercise and brought into being thirty-seven Community Education Councils (CECs), each comprising between thirty to fifty representatives of local communities whose responsibility it was to administer a substantial budget and all the CE arrangements for their area. Over one hundred new professional posts were also established, the majority for school-based Community Education Tutors (CTs). The policy was specifically intended 'to put Derbyshire into the forefront of community education development nationally' (DCC, 1986:.v). Implementation began with the appointment of more than eighty CTs in late 1987 / early 1988.

Soon afterwards, the *Education [No.2] Reform Act 1988* (the ERA) firmly signalled the new influence on both educational practice and the operation of local government of a very different set of values from those which had given rise to Derbyshire's thinking about CE at the beginning of the decade. By 1991, all the CT posts had been disestablished, to be followed a year later by those of the CEC Co-ordinators; remaining CE staff have twice been re-organised; the county's Education Department has been restructured; and the main architects of the CE policy - those who created the vision which never quite became reality - have long since moved on.

The CECs were the last remaining link with the original vision. If, as my councillor friend asked, I 'tell people' - you - a little of 'what's been going on' in Derbyshire and how the vision seems to have been lost, what value will that have, and for whom? The question is open for debate but my own answer is the product of a personal journey which has taken much the same length of time as Derbyshire's apparently ill-fated voyage into CE, and during which our travels became linked. Along the way I have metamorphosed from a community educator into an academic. This paper represents, in part, an attempt to come to terms with what that means for my own 'sense of self'. Underpinning it is the question of who really benefits from the recording and analysis in an academic arena of the ways in which politicians and practitioners try to turn vision into policy and practice.

Through the looking glass

Metaphorically, my journey from community education to academe seems to have taken me, like Alice, through a looking glass into another world where priorities are different. Most notably, the written word tends to be more highly valued than the activity it describes and I have not found that entirely comfortable. However, from this side of the looking glass there appears to be a possibility of encapsulating the practices and processes of education in the community within a broader, theoretical context, and of reflecting this back into the 'real' world in a form which has the potential both to celebrate and to change practice. Or is that simply to try to justify my present position in a world I might not now inhabit had Derbyshire's vision of CE not temporarily dominated my own professional life?

In December 1986, when DCC published its CE *Programme For Development* (commonly known as 'The Pink Book'), I had long been involved in CE in various guises and was then working part-time in a new Centre for Continuing Vocational Education at the University of Sheffield. Having prepared a successful bid to provide a staff development programme for the newly-appointed Derbyshire CTs, I was subsequently invited to co-ordinate it. The task felt daunting. In my personal notes, I wrote:

‘Panic!!! Just finished chairing the first meeting of the Advisory Group. They seem happy with the outline proposals and even offered congratulations on the up-to-date academic references! But I can't believe I'm doing this! I've done some CE, I've even done a Master's course about CE - but all these people have donkey's years of experience in doing and managing it. Do I know enough to be of any use to them? To even be credible???!’

Whatever their answer might be, I certainly learned a lot from the fifteen months of the programme! It culminated in a conference (at which Tim Brighouse was a key speaker) to examine the emerging implications for CE of the ERA. The introduction to the Conference Proceedings records:

“... the programme has provided a learning experience for all of us. And perhaps that is as it should be: if education is indeed, as Archbishop Temple wrote before the 1944 Education Act came into being, about the difference between abilities that are actual and those that are potential, then, as educators recognise and actualise their own potential abilities, the greater the potential of the education system itself must become.”

In arguing that the education system must not lose sight of its fundamental duty to develop the individual as it struggles to come to terms with the market forces of modern society, Tim Brighouse reminded the conference of Temple's vision and suggested that "the image of what 'is' and what 'might be' runs right through education". That image gave rise to Derbyshire's Pink Book. The commitment, enthusiasm - and good humour - of practitioners in Community Education in Derbyshire, as they respond to it, suggest that what 'might be' in the county will be well worth watching (Hunt and Clarke, 1989: iii).

Those who have been watching have now witnessed the virtual demise of CE in Derbyshire as it has fought a losing battle against the new political imperatives of the ERA and subsequent legislation. Because I experienced at first hand the heady

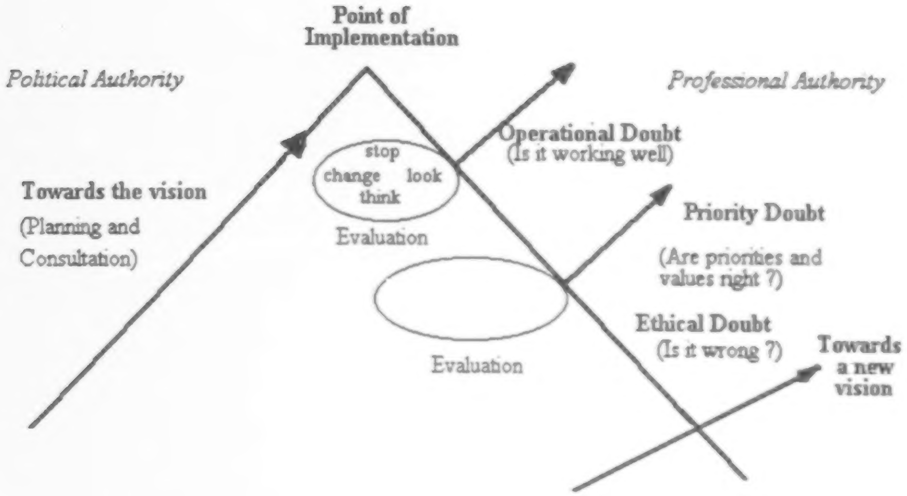
Point of Implementation
Political Authority
Professional Authority
Operational Doubt
(Is it working well)
stop
change look
think
Evaluation
Towards the vision
(Planning and Consultation)
Priority Doubt
(Are priorities and values right ?)
Ethical Doubt
(Is it wrong ?)
Evaluation
Towards a new vision

Figure 1 : **The Parabola: A Model showing the 'life cycle' and critical 'doubt points' of project development**
(After Hope and Timmel, 1988: 71)

excitement of the early days of attempting to translate policy into practice, I have felt a personal sense of loss as the jobs of many of the people whose ideas, enthusiasm, concerns and frustrations I briefly shared have been devalued or lost. Opportunities for practitioners and participants in CE in Derbyshire to recognise and develop their potential have diminished and my community educator's heart grieves with them. Nevertheless, my head tells me that to write about these issues constitutes research which has already played a part in my own personal and career development as an academic. I have become a proper resident in the world of the written word

I shall draw on it in the next section, making reference to a model which provides a useful tool for analysis of the rise and disappearance of 'vision, values and optimism', before returning in conclusion to the notion of the academic looking glass.

Research: reflecting a broader picture?

Hope and Timmel (1988:71-74) use terms reminiscent of Brighouse's commentary on Temple to specify what is needed for a vision of how things might be to stand a chance of becoming the reality of how things are. In their view, a project is ready for implementation only when certain conditions have been fulfilled: the 'visionaries' have been able to share what they see with others; values have been clarified and agreed; and goals made clear. Thereafter, 'It is essential to stop from time to time to reflect ... checking on *goals, roles and relationships*' (original emphasis). As Figure 1 illustrates, unless critical 'doubt points' are recognised, and appropriate action taken, time and the changing social context in which practice evolves may fashion a reality far removed from the original vision. This is clearly the case with CE in Derbyshire now, despite the preliminary 'sharing and clarifying' processes having been undertaken in what seemed an exemplary manner. Consultation and discussion was widespread, detailed, and had a clear impact on the final policy document. However, with hindsight, three problems can be identified which never seem to have been properly recognised or resolved but which cast a long shadow across the vision. Two are endemic in CE itself. The first is a 'confusion of tongues' (as Hope and Timmel [*ibid*] point out in relation to values, assumptions are often made about the depth of agreement, and the same words frequently disguise different meanings). The second concerns the interactions in CE between the interests of politicians, professionals and local communities. The third is linked to the last point but stemmed specifically from financial decisions made by DCC, largely in response to new controls being exerted by central government.

There is not the space here to discuss these in detail but, as Figure 1 shows, perhaps the most crucial moment in turning vision into reality comes at the point of implementation when politicians, those who have sanctioned and agreed to finance a project, hand over to the professionals who are charged with making it happen. In a sense, this was recognised by the then Chairs of Derbyshire's Education Committee and CE Working Party, who wrote in the Foreword to the Pink Book:

"We do not claim that this is the definitive statement in community education. Better let it be seen as a blueprint for development which will be a basis for policy decisions by the Education Committee, and which will help the practitioners to put policy into practice" (DCC, 1986: i).

Unfortunately, this working relationship was never to recover from a decision to cut the proposed CE budget from £4.5m to £1.5m in the wake of the 1987 general election. The number of CE posts to be offered had to be drastically reduced, and the time-scale for implementation extended. It was a time to ask not '*Is* it working well?' but '*Can* it work as originally envisaged?'. Given that over a hundred CTs were to have been appointed, together with thirty-seven CEC Co-ordinators, twenty District Officers and several Area and Assistant Education Officers, one solution might have been to reduce the number of appointments overall but to set up complete teams in selected areas, perhaps where small pilot projects had already been established and/or where schools understood and were keen to develop a CE dimension to their work.

However, DCC had long been controlled by the 'old-style' Labour Party which operated on paternalistic principles and preferred a county-wide approach, even where this seemed to take little account of local conditions and requirements: it was decided that the CE programme should go ahead in a limited form across the entire county, beginning with the appointment of around eighty CTs, many of whom would now have to serve more than one school (in some cases, a whole cluster). Other posts were to be phased in during the following year but, in the event, only twenty Co-ordinators were ever appointed and some other posts never materialised. The balance between the intended goals, professional roles, and relationships between local schools and communities as originally envisaged had been dramatically shifted - but remained largely unquestioned, with no effective mechanism, short of a full-scale review, by which it could be altered after implementation had begun.

The Pink Book had offered a brave and welcoming new world of CE, but many of the CTs who had been attracted by it now found themselves not only in schools where Headteachers and staff were not always completely clear about, nor entirely supportive of, the Tutor's role, but also without the expected CE team structure outside the school to provide encouragement. The allusion to a 'blueprint for development' was more literal than they might have supposed: in reality, the Pink Book provided no more than a sketch map from which they were expected to construct the new world for themselves. Not surprisingly, many felt isolated and confused about the work they were expected to do and became angry and frustrated with DCC. The tensions which arose undoubtedly added weight to the final decision, when a county-wide review did take place, to disestablish the CTs' posts after only three years in operation.

The review was precipitated by the approach of the vesting day of the local management of schools, as prescribed by the ERA, and DCC's consequent decision to transfer the budget for the employment of CTs from schools to a central resource for CE. Schools were required to renegotiate the terms on which CTs would be based there, and the CECs were also asked to comment. Most CECs wanted CTs' work to be more firmly based in the community, and to have greater control over it. Given the schools' own preoccupation at that time with new patterns of management and curriculum responsibilities, the twin strands of Derbyshire's CE policy, once regarded as its great strength, seemed entwined in such a way that the community strand might pull the other completely out of the school system. Before priorities could be tested, the county's continuing financial problems had forced the Education Committee to cut the CE budget by £1,850,000. Disestablishment of the CT posts saved £1,062,000.

The vestiges of a CE service remain in Derbyshire, but outwardly it is barely distinguishable from the separate adult education and youth provision which the vision encapsulated by the Pink Book attempted to replace. CECs still exist in name but the membership is greatly reduced and disillusioned, they have no real direction, little left to administer, and the latest cuts have now removed the services of the Clerks who represented the last formal link with DCC.

Is this an appropriate tale to tell you at a conference dedicated to 'celebrating' adult education? Drawing on the metaphors of journeying and reflection, I think it is. Derbyshire's original vision of CE may have faded - but for a time it acted as a beacon which encouraged hundreds of practitioners and participants alike to set out on new educational pathways. Along the way many have discovered new images of 'what might be' - for themselves and for their communities. There is frustration and anger that some of the pathways now seem blocked, to be less well sign-posted - or to have become toll roads, but few would argue that the journey thus far has been without pleasure or personal gain.

My own journey brought me into contact with the images and processes of reflective practice. As a result, I worry less about my 'credibility' in terms of *what* I know. I am more concerned with *how* I know and what the effects are of *what I do* with that knowledge. Such concerns inform the choices I make about what I research and write, who it is 'for', and how I can make some return to those from whom it is derived. In both teaching and writing I am mindful of a student who said of her MEd course, "I need you to provide a context in which I can challenge - and validate - my work, my beliefs and my professional practices". I now 'justify' being an academic in terms of providing a framework to reflect back to individuals and communities what already exists in a form in which it can be challenged, changed - or celebrated. I try to provide a suitable looking glass where, as T.S.Eliot suggested:

> ... the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

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'Multiplying visions and using similitudes': literature as change agent and the changing place of literature in the adult education curriculum.

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This paper discusses 'visions' for the future of literature as a subject within the adult education curriculum. The call for papers makes specific mention of the landmark publication in 1970 of The Pedagogy of the Oppressed and it seems worth reflecting upon Freire's emphasis on the teaching of reading not as the development of a mechanistic skill but as a route to conscientization. McCormick (1994) notes that all literature teachers are engaged in the process of teaching reading, in the broadest sense of that term. I think it would be useful to consider how the models and methods we adopt as literature teachers, informed by our own theoretical positions, impact upon our students' freedom to read texts, read situations, read themselves and their lives, in ways which might be radically transformative.

Adult education today finds itself under pressure to justify its existence in terms of outcomes and utility - often seen as vocational rather than personal or academic utility. This may at first sight appear to be at the other end of the continuum from any commitment to conscientization or emancipatory learning. In the context of literature teaching, however, these extremes can be linked through a consideration of the term critical thinking. Such a consideration makes it possible to examine how far studying literature develops transferable and often highly marketable skills whilst also asking whether there are processes unique to literature teaching and learning which are in themselves potentially radical and emancipatory.

I shall illustrate the exploration by reference to an ongoing ethnographic study examining the impact of literary and cultural studies on mature women returners. The study attempts to identify how literary analysis prompts changes in students' perceptions and to determine how and if this impacts on other aspects of their lives.

The term critical thinking is used in different ways. For the purposes of this paper I have divided these into two overlapping traditions. The first, which I shall call the positivist approach, emerges from philosophy and is concerned with the development of logical reasoning skills; the second, the emancipatory approach, has more in common with Habermas's (1979) concept of emancipatory learning and with Mezirow's (1991) work on transformation theory and focuses on critical reflection and experiential learning.

The archetypal text devoted to the positivist approach is Thouless's (1932) which looks at helping students to recognise tricks of argument, bias, emotive language and what it terms 'dishonesty' in argument. A wide range of activity still takes place within this tradition (Robinson 1989). My research with women returners suggests that there are certain kinds of activities associated with the study of literature which tend to promote precisely the kind of reasoned thought which is the object of this school of critical thinking. Positivist approaches attempt to dissuade students from two tendencies - the making of unsupported assertions and generalising from personal and particular incidents. Whilst literature teachers do encourage students to develop personal responses we also spend time encouraging students to justify their interpretations through textual evidence. The teacher's insistence that students prove their assertions through textual reference is the literary equivalent of the search for 'the empirical soundness of generalised conclusions' (Robinson 1989) which students who are thinking critically should be able to demonstrate.

There are all kinds of problems associated with the potential rigidity of this model of literature teaching. Observation suggests though, that it often develops useful thinking skills by encouraging students to think beyond the personal (this does not have to be the same thing as rejecting the personal -it can be about contextualising the personal) and to begin to ask questions about the status of interpretations and claims to truth. An example illustrates the point and shows how this positivist critical thinking can begin to be a trigger for the critically reflective work associated with the emancipatory tradition.

Students reading The Magic Toyshop (Carter 1967) were quite confident that the child Melanie had had an unloved childhood and did not love her parents, but could find little textual evidence for this claim. At this stage they were simply being forced to work harder to make their case, to think logically and support their assertions. They pointed to some aspects of the text which had led them to reach this conclusion, but agreed that they did not really prove very much and began to find other features contradicting their first conclusions. As their discussions progressed they began to move towards what Brookfield (1987) calls emancipatory learning, challenging their assumptions, by recognising a sociolinguistic premise distortion (Mezirow 1991) rooted in their own class based beliefs about appropriate child rearing. The depiction of a middle class family where the parents and children lived relatively independent lives had been taken as an indication of neglect or lack of care and affection between family members.

The second feature of literature teaching which seems to promote this positivist critical thinking comes with aspects of formal approaches to literature, emphasising critical analysis and close reading. Students are asked to respond to literature, but also to indicate what it is about the text which promotes that response. Such approaches may overemphasise the power of the text, yet their virtue for the development of critical thinking is that students become very conscious of how language may manipulate feelings and responses. This experience can provoke a degree of 'reflective skepticism' (Brookfield 1987) whereby students become more critical of things they hear and read, less likely to allow the form of a message to dictate their response to its content. Study skills and critical thinking skills courses attempt to teach this by making students aware of things such as false syllogism, conflated argument or emotive language, through the use of example and exercise. The study of, say, seventeenth century poetry with its use of wit, rhetoric and specious argument, soon induces awareness of the first two of these features, whilst a class's explorations of its response to vocabulary, description and figurative language enhances its consciousness of emotive language.

Although the study of literature can help to promote positivist critical thinking it seems to have a particular affinity with critical thinking (Brookfield 1987) transformation theory (Mezirow, 1991) emancipatory learning (Habermas, 1979) and conscientization (Freire, 1970). Interesting aspects of literature teaching in terms of this emancipatory critical thinking include learning to cope with non rational thought and the potential offered by metaphoric and metonymic thought processes for handling ambiguity, complexity and multiple meaning.

Brookfield challenges the emphasis on rational thought sometimes found in work on critical thinking (1987, 1994) and recognises the importance of the emotions for critical thinkers. He talks about 'breaking with rational modes of thought' as essential for the 'ability to imagine alternatives.' (1987:12) He values this as a form of creativity needed for effective personal relationships and creative workplace behaviour. Literary texts and encounters with other people's readings of these compel students to grapple with ways of thinking and arranging ideas other than by logical syllogistic processes. Some writing is certainly ratiocinative in organisation, but other pieces have as their primary mode of organisation allusive thought processes moving not by logical sequencing but by association. Much writing also has a rational structure which is undercut by associative and allusive aspects of the text working against or existing in tension with its more rational dimensions. Similarly the interpretations and comments of critics, teachers and fellow students may try to impose readings which rely on linking ideas within the text associatively, supporting or opposing readings which seem more straightforward. This kind of work often caused difficulties for students in the sample; it also caused great excitement and a sense of seeing differently.

An exploration of European feminist literary theory, particularly the work of Kristeva, Cixous and Irigaray, offers considerable insights into the possibilities literature offers for breaking with rational ways of thinking. Their work is too complex and controversial to summarise meaningfully in a short paper but I do believe that an examination of the potential literature holds for promoting emancipatory learning and for developing critical thinking would benefit from a more detailed consideration of these theories. This is because these writers seem to suggest that developing metaphorical, associative and metonymic habits of thought might almost be a form of revolutionary activity. Following Lacan, they associate logical grammatical processes with the controlling power of the father and of patriarchy. Thus, ways of thinking and writing which challenge or defy language's complicity with logic are seen to be resisting patriarchal authority. I acknowledge that I am oversimplifying subtle and complex theories which have provoked scepticism and criticism. It is difficult, for example, to be clear about the status of a revolutionary act which confines itself to linguistic rather than social or economic change, although I believe the two often overlap in practice. Nevertheless, a concern with the future and purpose of literary studies in adult education might benefit from grappling further with the possibility of cross fertilisation between transformation theory, critical thinking and some of the works of European feminist literary theorists.

The teaching of literature may well have its own special contribution to make to the development of creative and critical thinking precisely because of its capacity to enable readers to break away from the constraints of rational thought. However there are other aspects of literature teaching with emancipatory potential.

Literary study engages the mind and the emotions through its capacity to promote self reflection. Fiction dealing with situations, characters and constructs which are particularly close to readers' experiences, read in an educational context where they can be challenged by others, leads to a reflection on oneself, one's relationships and to questions about whether that which had seemed individual, natural and inevitable was in fact to a lesser or greater degree socially constructed. Much of students' speculative reflection in learning journals hovered around these questions as a result of reading popular romantic fiction, for example. In some cases it also led students to ask in whose interests such constructions might be operating, yet sometimes, conversely provoked resistance to thinking critically. Students moved away from earlier insights and strove energetically to integrate threatening new ideas into existing meaning perspectives rather than abandon those perspectives. It was common to see students connecting the discussions we were having about romance with their personal experiences. Many identified a gap between expectation and reality in their experiences of romance but then fought to attribute relationship difficulties to individuals - themselves or their partners - and not to wider social patterns.

Maxine Greene (1990: 251-2) cites the 'emancipatory potential of literary art' because it has the capacity to encourage empathy with those 'whose voices were silenced for so long'. I observed how the introduction of historical material and attempts to undertake cross cultural work with students constantly challenged their assumptions about norms of behaviour and moral values. They became not only intellectually aware that others had different beliefs, customs and values but were invited to experience these vicariously through identification with characters in texts. For some women these materials challenged for the first time their sense of security in the emancipation of women. They realised how recently and how cyclically their freedoms were granted and how fragile some of those freedoms were.

Finally, it was interesting to observe students reactions to metaphor and metonymy in their reading. Ricoeur talks about metaphor as 'the creative use of polysemy' (1972: 7). The recognition of these forms of polysemy 'that remarkable feature of natural languages to mean more than one thing' makes students engage with their own beliefs about meaning. In other words it begins to challenge their epistemic premises (Mezirow, 1991). I observed students beginning their study of a text with a desire to fix the meanings of metaphor and of figurative language and poetic discourse in general. In plenary sessions they sometimes tried to reduce the metaphor or the metonymic content of the text to a series of algebraic equations, e.g red = passion. Continued engagement with the text and with their fellow students brought them to a stage where they could recognise competing and contradictory claims for meaning embodied within the same metaphor - they built a more adventurous relationship with meaning.

Working with metaphor and metonymy made the students aware of the contextuality of meaning. Students can encounter different viewpoints in any subject; metaphor is significant because in discussing it students do not merely come to see that they all hold different views about the world but about the meaning of words on a page, something which many of them had taken for granted previously. Group discussion over a period of time helped them to see all the factors which contributed to the making of meaning - what McCormick calls the repertoires of the reader and the repertoires of the text, both general and literary (1994 p93). It is precisely because metaphor does not always make obvious sense that students are forced to do this. Most dramatically perhaps an encounter with a novel metaphor, that which makes connections which do not rely on any similarities hitherto observed, can be a trigger event prompting critical thinking. Literature, through its metaphorical qualities, does, as Coleridge noted, have the capacity to make the familiar strange. If critical thinking is about finding new ways of seeing, breaking out of familiar habits of thought, then the metaphor which actually creates new meaning stimulates critical thought by shocking students into a reassessment of the world and their perception of it. Our visions for the future of literature teaching might include continued detailed consideration of the links between literary theory and adult education theory, particularly where the latter concerns itself with transformative learning processes. Work in literary and cultural studies appears to promote critical thinking by encouraging students to empathise with different perspectives and experiences, by reflecting their own experiences back to them changed and strange, by encouraging them to engage with the sociocultural context shaping their own beliefs and experiences, and by helping them to recognise the emergent and shifting nature of meaning and interpretation.

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Experimental archaeology in education; past, present, future

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Twenty-five years ago the small Committee for Ancient Agriculture met to plan what was to prove a turning-point in the conceptual content of British Archaeology. A mere three years later, their brainchild - the Butser Ancient Farm - was operational: a working, prehistoric farm on a Hampshire Downland site describing itself as 'A Project for Research and Education'. In its initial Prospectus the committee set out its objectives thus...

'The project...involves the establishment of an insitute unique in this country which should bring great benefit in archaeological interpretation, in the presentation of prehistory and history to students of all ages, in the use of educational methods involving practical work and in interesting the public who visit Butser...The final justification for the permanence of the ancient farm will be that it lies at the heart of a research institution whose teaching virtues stretch beyond pure archaeology into natural history, ecology and the inculcation of simple accurate observation, vital to research in all fields.'

Today we can see the results of their endeavours near Chalton, Hampshire. The Ancient Farm is set in about 300 BC, the later Iron Age, and the visitor finds a working prehistoric farm, with appropriate animals, crops and technology, and of course round-houses that serve a number of purposes. The impression is one of non-stop, year-round activity, involving schools, colleges and universities, extra-mural classes and archaeological societies. An open-air classroom, in fact.

It is an open-air laboratory, too. The research element is as important as the educational, and all the major features are ongoing experiments with data collection one of the principal activities. This unique combination of experimental research and education marks an important shift in archaeological thinking. The mission of the archaeologist is not merely to discover fresh information, but also to explain it: not merely to describe the past, but also to interpret it. Traditionally, the published interpretations of archaeological discoveries have shown a tendency to become established as 'facts'; it is from these supposed facts that the authoritative text-books have been written, and it is from the text-books that education normally proceeds. Put baldly in this way, the fallacy is easily recognised: the 'facts' are often not facts at all, but hypotheses, in many cases unverified hypotheses, on which a structure of further conclusions is built. If any point in the structure is tested, and fails the test, the whole is in danger of collapse. The new development is an inexorable, if often reluctant, realisation that the structure has to be rigorously tested: and that scientific experiment is one important way of doing this. This is perfectly familiar to anyone working in, or teaching, the physical sciences. Our students are taught to challenge and question, and every school or university laboratory is dedicated to experiments that test the basic principles of science, taking the students back to first principles.

In the humanities, and particularly in the study of the ancient world, this discipline is generally absent. Archaeology in particular has for too long been dominated by the 'armchair archaeologist', who uses reasoning or guesswork to interpret material remains. Theoretical speculation is thus substituted for practice. Experimental testing, by contrast, takes the research data from excavations and provides the feedback necessary for a realistic interpretation of them. One or more hypotheses are formed from the excavated evidence; then - normally by means of an empirically replicative experiment - the hypotheses are tested, modified and tested again until satisfactory answers are forthcoming. Each test provides not the answer, but usually one of many answers; for there are often many ways of producing a given result. To the archaeologist, a new scientific tool is provided; as an educational tool, for children and adults, experimental archaeology offers at the same time a practical means of exploring the past and an introduction to the disciplines of the scientific method (Reynolds 1994, 2).

To understand the evolution of this technique, we have to go back to the Scandinavian discoveries of prehistoric bronze horns from 1768 onwards, and to the perfectly natural attempts to see what sounds they might have produced (Coles, J. 1973, 13-14; 1979, 11sq). This was casual curiosity, rather than scientific enquiry, but it did create considerable public interest in the sound of antiquity. By contrast with these obviously musical instruments, it was a full century before the effectiveness of chipped flint axes was satisfactorily demonstrated; between 1878 and 1881 the lord of the manor of Broholm, Denmark, had been using new wooden hafts on ancient flint axe-heads, and his masterpiece was a neolithic log cabin (unfortunately of spurious design and materials) constructed in 1879 using only original flint axes. His hypothesis - that sophisticated carpentry was possible with flint tools before the discovery of bronze or iron - received its final scientific validation in 1951, when a rather different hypothesis was tested. For many years the pollen curves from c.3,000 BC had shown puzzling anomalies: it was evident that the prehistoric tree-cover throughout Europe had changed its character dramatically. Conventional wisdom that climatic change was responsible was met by the theory that neolithic farmers, wielding the new flint axes, had artificially changed the picture, first by felling unimaginable areas of forest and then by burning the results to prepare fresh land for cultivation - the 'slash-and-burn' technique still practised by some primitive communities. But was this really possible in prehistory? Only scientific tests could suggest an answer, and so the forest of Draved Wood, Denmark, was dedicated to an experiment to test it. Replica flint axe-heads were made and hafted, and foresters were trained in the new techniques of using them. The detailed documentation of the subsequent felling process (Jorgensen 1985) astonished the critics by the sheer speed with which trees came down and were dismembered; the newly burnt forest floor was hoed, planted and harvested - again with results that were meticulously recorded; and the experiment was concluded by allowing the forest to regenerate naturally and produce its own characteristic pollen. Everything matched the archaeological data. The theory was vindicated.

So, too, was the methodology, as has happened in numerous later examples. Archaeologists are slowly losing their doubts about the relevance of it to modern archaeology, and welcome the new research tool; so, too, do our students as they learn to penetrate the past in this way. Nevertheless, both groups (the scholars and the students) need to be reminded about the limitations of the method: first, that experimental results merely tell us what might have been possible in antiquity, not what actually happened. The conclusion is not a new fact, but a new hypothesis that fits the facts better. The second limitation has some bearing on the educational application, the questions that our students are encouraged to ask.

'Experiments are one way to better understand the relationship between objects and the human beings who once acted in a certain way to produce the objects. They can also be used to illuminate processes by which the objects came to rest, to be found by the archaeologist. Ethnoarchaeology, ethnographic analogy and systems analysis are other ways to explore this relationship. The artifacts are what we have; the society behind them is what we want to know about... In my opinion, for us archaeologists it is answering "why?" rather than "how?" that should be our ultimate goal.' (Olausson, 1987)

This is an extreme point of view, and many practitioners take the precise opposite, accepting that replicative experimentation can provide only a limited understanding of the original human problems of settlement, subsistence, shelter and a variety of arts and crafts:

'It must be realised that these problems do not include all aspects of cultural behaviour; social and political organisation, and religious beliefs, are vital and important human elements which cannot be recreated or tested by hardware experiments. Other forms of model-building, of theoretical character, are often used to attempt such reconstructions, and they provide a stimulating source of exercise and argument...' (Coles, 1979: 243)

This dilemma, which is by no means resolved, raises the question of the relevance of experimental archaeology to modern education. Our students belong to the modern world, and the remote past can often be more alien to them than any other present-day culture. Yet lessons from the study of it are, in fact, highly relevant to the modern world. The effort to understand an alien culture forces us to consider similarities and differences - an effort that itself can be part of a valid educational experience. Replication of the past comprises a wide spectrum of activities, ranging from the purely recreational to the strictly scientific. At its simplest, a three-dimensional encounter with the past can usually induce a momentary empathy with it. As practical 'project work', properly conceived and carried through, this empathy can generate valid insights. Hands-on contact with basic materials, stone, clay, timber, fire and edible materials is something denied to us by modern technology. The answer to 'how am I to survive?' is no longer 'I shall buy a house and go shopping' but 'where do I start?'. This was the first question the human race had to answer; and it is healthy for our students to recreate at first hand the subsequent practical problems that had to be solved on the long journey to the present.

It is important to distinguish the problem-solving approach, with its successes and failures, from the 'living history' exercises with which it is often confused. A cardboard shield, a blanket and a wooden sword can enable a child to 'become a Viking' for a day; acting out the past may have a value, if it generates excitement and an enthusiasm for further study (Dyer 1983, passim). But it can mislead dangerously, if fun is the only end-product, or if imagination is mistaken for authenticity. A simple classroom project in 1983 demonstrated the reality of an experiment properly conducted. A group of 12-year olds was interested in drinking-horns. Trial and error solved the problems of cleaning and working the very raw material delivered direct from the abbatoir; their teacher adds (for the benefit of others wishing to follow his example) 'But be warned - it's a rather gruesome business, and you will need to do as much as possible out of doors or the smell will haunt you in your dreams!' (Ryde, 1983). Technology apart, the project answered specific questions, such as: 'how do you hold it?' and 'what do you do if you want to put it down before it's empty?' In practice, the capacity proved disappointingly small, and the class concluded that the half-empty horn can seldom have been a problem in antiquity; by contrast, the huge horns of the heroic age must have required drinkers of equally heroic capacity to down the lot in one go!

Educational projects seldom count, however, as true scientific research, since for purely practical reasons they cannot meet the full criteria for acceptance. Many of the criteria are common to all the sciences: the experiment should test one or more hypotheses, it should be fully monitored and documented, it must be capable of independent repetition by others, and the results should be fully published. Archaeology, by its nature, introduces further requirements, especially the need to ensure that ancient and modern conditions are comparable, and if not, that allowances for any disparity are made in the evaluation. This applies to climate, materials, technology, the expertise (or inexperience) of participants and many other factors. Since the experiment is an exercise in analogical reasoning, these are the parameters that ensure its validity. As in any analogy, some parameters may be irrelevant (Hodder 1982, 11-27), but the experimenter carries a serious responsibility to an often unsuspecting public for ensuring that, innocently or otherwise, nobody is misled when corners are cut.

Significantly, many experimental centres and projects are closely associated with universities, such as the Centre for Pottery Studies at Leiden, and the Experimental Firing Group at Leicester. At Cambridge experimental archaeology is a full subject at degree level. In universities throughout the world, it is one of many research techniques frequently found in postgraduate theses. In extramural and WEA classes, simple experiments are used for demonstration and class study; more ambitious projects have sometimes produced valid new data and conclusions (eg Bryant 1971, Coleman-Smith 1971). And regular courses for undergraduates and adults are held at the Butser Ancient Farm.

This paper, offered to a Conference celebrating 25 years of educational innovation, has focused upon a single subject field; it celebrates the emergence of a new concept with historical roots - a context in which education and scientific research can be meaningfully related. In considering it, we also celebrate the far-sighted members of the committee we met at the beginning of this study; as adult educators, we owe more than perhaps we realise to their vision and to the enterprise that they shrewdly subtitled 'A Project for Research and Education.'

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We're still here. Unemployment, work and adult education - reasons to be cheerful?

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An emphasis on celebrating Adult Education gives me the opportunity to escape from accreditation angst and look again at the work which brought me into university adult education ten years ago - education with unwaged adults. At a local level, I want to celebrate that 'we're still here' - the educational base for unwaged adults I helped set up in Southampton as part of a 1985 Replan project is still alive and well and run through the local FE College. In the first part of this paper, I want to review progress at the base and relate this to some of the lessons learned and issues arising from the Replan and other experience of working with unwaged adults.

At a broader level the fact that 'we're still here' appears to afford little cause for celebration - as many adults are unwaged today as ten years ago and adult educators are still struggling to develop a meaningful role in relation to mass unemployment. In the latter part of this paper, I want to examine some of the key issues and possible opportunities for adult education engagement with work and unemployment in the future, within the context of a rapidly-changing and fragmenting, post-Fordist labour market.

We're still here - local reasons to be cheerful?

Arguably, the most important aspect of an action research project is the action and the most important criterion of success is that the action continues when the project (funding) ends. Therefore there must be some cause for celebration that a learning base for unwaged adults set up 10 years ago as part of an action research process continues to survive, and develop, in the very different circumstances of 1995. Ten years on, the base is better resourced, more organised and its work further integrated into mainstream practice and funding structures.

In terms of resources, it has benefited from the accrued wealth of a decade's existence and from becoming integrated into mainstream College, Basic Skills and Further Education Funding Council structures. No longer are there 57 different varieties of computer/wordprocessor/ typewriter and it would certainly be less justifiable now to talk, as one original unwaged member did, about 'second-hand resources for second-class citizens'. It is now a more secure, stable and organised venue with a College co-ordinator to induct, guide, support and monitor the progress and outcomes of users of the base; a track-record with adults with disabilities and regular access to a well-resourced creche. No longer is it necessary for members of the base to construct their own ramps or to negotiate access to someone else's creche.

It also has a clearer identity i.e. a learning base for unwaged adults with specific expertise, equipment and support to develop Basic Skills in English, Maths and ESOL as well as Computing, Photography and Arts and Crafts, and affording a range of progression routes into vocational skills training, Open Learning, mainstream 'non-vocational' adult education provision and an Access course next door. No longer is there so much difficulty, for example, in an outreach context, in getting across to potential unwaged participants exactly what the base is for; no longer does it appear to offer everything and nothing, where the effective choice is between a variety of self-help learning activities, involvement in welfare rights advice, some purpose-designed courses run by university staff or the (dubious?) privilege of serving on a committee alongside a couple of professors. Perhaps, most significantly, there is now a clearer understanding of and response to plurality and diversity - the education now offered to unwaged adults extends to a wide range of students, including community groups from different ethnic backgrounds, women's groups from different age ranges, single parents in temporary bed and breakfast accommodation, local community associations. No longer is it necessary to worry about some people, especially women, being put off by what was once described as a 'predominantly male atmosphere'. (Johnston, 1987)

However, these gains may still need to be set against some possible losses since the time of the original Replan project. Along with the extra stability, resources and greater organisation, may also have gone some of the excitement and ownership of being a participative, self-help project where unwaged adults themselves played a major part in converting, equipping, managing and promoting the base, in deciding the curriculum and who did what. Whereas the original project had placed great emphasis on participatory processes and the encouragement of student voice, today meetings and participation are more modestly constructed and less frequent and consist largely of the concerns of users as educational consumers at the base - what equipment needs to be replaced, where there is demand for new courses etc. Significantly, in the era of John Major's Citizen's Charter, the base 'members' of ten years ago are now termed 'users.' Alongside the clearer profile for the base and more defined learning activities, there is now less emphasis on experiential knowledge and a learning exchange based on the strengths and interests of participants. Although the base has a more identifiable purpose, there is now less scope both for outreach and for negotiation of the curriculum as part of the outreach process. With learning activities now more specifically identified and funded, the ending of the unwaged-run welfare rights service and some rationalisation of social activities and space, the base has less of a political 'feel' to it - there is less discussion of employment and unemployment issues and less oppositional discourse to prevailing government values and policies. Maybe with the ending of the project and direct university involvement, there may be a less conscious (and less rhetorical?) theorisation of practice? A final irony is that one of the base's main achievements in recognising and responding to plurality and diversity, in targeting more successfully a variety of community groups, in abandoning some self-help activities like welfare rights advice and bicycle repair workshops, and so contributing to the elimination of the previous 'male' atmosphere, means that (unemployed) men are in danger of becoming, once again, a minority group as in the rest of adult education provision.

At one level, the above analysis of 'gains' and 'losses' can be seen to represent a neat reflection of a move from a temporary, experimental and participatory adult education project to a more established, modest and functional part of mainstream FE. However, another way to view it would be to see the changes in culture and practice at the base as an appropriate, pragmatic and necessary response to the very different policy context of 1995, reflecting the dramatic ideological and legislative changes in post-compulsory education where a change in the 'dominant vocabulary of motives' stresses 'the vocational rather than the academic, the instrumental rather than the expressive, the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic' (Dale, 1989: 14). Seen more specifically in adult education terms, the transition from project 'vision, invention and intervention' to mainstream stability, progression and consolidation, might only demonstrate, at a micro level, a move away from the vision and social purpose inspired by a once-predominant modernism and sustained within the relative autonomy accorded by adult education marginality, and towards the functional security of funding-led direction within a more uncertain post-modern world.

Education with unwaged adults - wider lessons and issues

At this stage, it may be opportune to review what adult educators have learned from our engagement with unwaged adults over the Replan period and beyond and to identify exactly how the issues have changed in the last ten years. The national scale and impact of Replan helped a wider audience to pick up on earlier educational work with unwaged adults (Wallis, 1978; Ward 1983) as well as generate its own lessons from the development and dissemination of a diversity of practice. Perhaps the main lesson learned was that educational approaches had to engage more directly with the primary needs and interests of unwaged adults i.e. paid work and the money, security and self-esteem that go with it, yet also try to relate this to what educators could realistically deliver. Not surprisingly, we have focused more on the latter aspect - arising from the Replan programme, there have been a range of initiatives that have been particularly successful in extending outreach, inter-agency co-operation, targeting, access and participation with unwaged and under-represented groups, and these have made their mark on mainstream educational policy and practice. While lessons have also been learned about the rapidly-changing nature of the labour market and some efforts have been made in local economic regeneration and employment creation, our response here has been limited by the obvious fact that employment is largely subject to macro economic and political forces, but also by that peculiar British division between education and training, sustained even today by the very different values and traditions of educators vis-à-vis employers and trainers. Whereas, in some parts of the country, potentially valuable, if sometimes uneasy, partnerships have been formed between university adult educators and organisations like TECS to try to tackle growing problems of social exclusion, widening inequality and long-term unemployment (Ward, 1995), in other areas, the gulf of values and cultures has, as yet proved too wide to bridge in any meaningful way.

It may also be instructive to review how, since the beginnings of Replan, the issues have changed. Certainly, we have moved on, perforce, from the primary concerns of outreach, access and participation to consider also competence, progression and outcomes. For adult educators, notwithstanding our reservations about the overall political context of educational policy-making and the function of prescribed outcomes, it would be delusory to view this shift of terrain as being all bad. Indeed, my recent re-investigation of experience at the Southampton learning base appears to show that such an emphasis has been clearly beneficial to a number of unwaged participants, affording many adults more concrete and recognisable progress for individuals (their primary agenda?) than had been possible when in earlier times we had tried to foster a much more social and political participation and empowerment (our primary agenda?). In the 90s, competence and accreditation have moved up the agenda and they clearly work for some people - but is this the whole story?

In this context, it may be appropriate to see how all this relates to the concept of empowerment, a now ubiquitous term freely used in educational discourse and increasingly in need of deconstruction and contextualisation. The empowerment we sought, and still seek to foster, in working with unwaged adults may need to be re-framed in relation to the existential situation of unwaged adults today and the 'realities' of a rapidly-changing labour market. Here, perhaps a post-modern perspective helps adult educators to escape from a long-time pre-occupation with the modernist polarities of 'education for domestication' versus 'education for liberation' and hence try to escape from the:

> "disabling oscillation between utopianism and despair, as education repeatedly promises to liberate the creative human talents of people and then fails to do so" (Donald, 1992:142).

The individualistic empowerment offered by vocational competence, by accredited progress up the educational ladder, may be modest and circumscribed, but it is demonstrable and achievable for some, at least. In contrast, Freirian social empowerment, although more critically-constructed and far-reaching, is less readily translated into practice. Empowerment clearly needs to have situated meaning in direct relation to the living and working contexts of unwaged citizens, so there may be some merit in trying to combine aspects of both approaches to empowerment, trying to link practical, step-by-step outcomes to more critical perspectives and radical possibilities. In this process an important new focus might be on citizenship, on looking towards marrying individual civil rights and broader social rights, on placing a greater emphasis on both the economic and cultural aspects of work. As adult educators, we need to engage with existing and imminent changes in the nature of work.

Education for work - broader reasons to be cheerful?

The global labour market is changing rapidly - not only is there an emerging core:periphery model of employment with full-time (often male) jobs contracting and part-time (often female) jobs growing apace, there is increasing economic insecurity amongst employed and unemployed alike. (Social Justice Commission, 1994) Like it or not, it looks very likely that the future pattern of our working lives will be much less secure and predictable, that people will move in and out of employment and between jobs much more frequently. Indeed, this situation is already leading politicians from both Left and Right to look critically at the whole basis of the welfare state and towards different, more flexible forms of social insurance. Certainly, the current benefits system, while certainly constituting a vital safety net for those out of paid work, also contributes to an employment situation where there are widening gaps between 'work-rich' and 'work-poor' families amidst an increasingly unequal society and the prospect of larger numbers of people becoming economically and socially excluded from society (Rowntree Foundation, 1995).

This scenario of increased inequality is profoundly depressing and clearly needs to be tackled through economic and social policy if we are to ensure greater equity, social justice and social cohesion. As part of this, these changes in the labour market allied to the increasingly-recognised need both to re-construct a national social insurance system and to re-finance the support of students in post-compulsory education, may offer the prospect of a new educational approach to work with unwaged or marginally-waged adults. A greater emphasis on citizenship, social justice and the possibility of lifelong education for all, for example, funded through a Learning Bank, (giving a whole new meaning to 'banking education'!), and the construction of more imaginative forms of social insurance may help us to move away from the trend, increasingly prevalent since 1979, of a labour market characterised by 'over-work' sitting alongside 'no work'. In this context, there is perhaps an opportunity to re-adjust our vision away from a rhetorical choice of either 'education for domestication' or 'education for liberation' to a new kind of critical vocationalism.

With the help of, for example, a broadly-based and redistributive national training levy, we may be able to escape from the current situation where education and training serve very largely to re-inforce economic and social divisions rather than share out more equitably work and life choices. With possibilities like a Citizen's Wage or a Participation Income, the focus could now be on 'education for work' where productive work covers a very wide range of activities from further education, voluntary work, community action, citizen's service, housework, caring, part-time work, casual work, self-employment, co-operative work right through to more conventional full time paid work. In this way, the productive work that many unwaged adults already do can be economically and socially validated, and society at large can benefit from it without resort to oppressive regimes like Workfare; and clearer, more flexible and more attractive pathways outlined for individuals to a variety of paid work as well as to other areas of personal and collective development and growth.

Such a vision is grounded in the dynamics of contemporary economic and social change. Current and predicted changes in the labour market could bring greater inequality but they could also offer forms of liberation for employed and unemployed alike; the 'feminisation' of the labour force may not necessarily equate with a more reductionist 'housewifization' of paid work (Hart, 1992: 20); and, with appropriate forms of social insurance, there may be a growing demand for part-time and flexible work from women and men alike. Within a new approach to work and education for work, there may be the opportunity for adult educators to try to bridge the gap between the narrow progression of certain approaches to competence and outcomes and the breadth of more radical but less readily achievable social alternatives, to try to foster amongst students a broad-based critical and flexible intelligence alongside a more informed 'reading' of the market and a more instrumental acquisition of appropriate skills and knowledge.

Adult education at a micro level will always be influenced greatly by economic, social and educational policy at a macro level and, clearly, prospects for a completely new approach to education for work will be dependent largely on wider policy changes. Still, even within the constraints of current policy, there may be some space for action today in developing a broad and critical vocationalism, although it might well mean working and negotiating with a wider range of partners than many of us have been used to. In doing this, adult educators need not sacrifice our fundamental values and principles nor abandon a critical perspective, but we will surely need to engage on a broader and more flexible front with others with an interest and stake in a wide variety of forms of and approaches to adult learning, whether they are TECs and employers on the one hand or communities and 'new social movements' on the other. In a time of rapid economic and social change, we need, more than ever, to try to relate our micro educational practice to an informed and critical macro social analysis - in attempting this and in collaborating with a wider range of partners, a central and potentially-unifying focus might be on a new approach to 'Education for Work.'

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Holding up the mirror: reflections of the education of adults through the pages of *Adult Education* 1950-1970.

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From 1927 until its demise in the 1980s Adult Education was for most of its life the major journal of the profession. This paper considers a specific period in the life of this journal - the two decades which form the immediate prehistory of SCUTREA, 1950-1970. The purpose is not to rehearse the history of the profession, its policies or practice in those years, but to consider the reflection of some aspects of that history in the pages of the journal, and to dwell a little on the inferences we can draw from the language used by the editors and contributors.

The first impression is that the Fifties began with a sense of mid-century and of uncertainty. The first issue of *Adult Education* for 1950 contains as its principal article: "1950 - A New Dispensation" intended to inaugurate "this new year at the turn of the century". Written by Guy Hunter, the warden of Urchfont Manor - one of the new breed of short-term residential colleges - this is by any account a remarkable piece. Here is an example:

"We have fallen low as it is, we scour the country trying to tempt the doubtful customer into our classes; and we face the uphill task of re-establishing the reputation of education as something for which to give up precious time and sacrifice precious money, rather than as an amusement condescendingly attended provided that the lecturer is not too dull." (Hunter, 1950:176)

Hunter has no doubts as to the centrality of the adult educator, and the magnitude of the social mission ahead:

"nothing less than to re-awaken faith in civilisation itself and to widen and deepen it throughout a huge society." (ibid: 169)

Hunter's discourse is most interesting, and reveals how close 1950 could feel to the evangelical early days of the profession. His eloquence encompasses rhetorical questions ("Is the foreman to become at one bound a philosopher?") and classic claims for the unifying virtues of liberal education: "The humanities are, I believe, a philosophic criticism of all departments of life, including an engineering works." (ibid:175)

Alongside this evangelicism this issue is much concerned with the perceived urgent need for a factual base for the study of provision. The Editorial is insistent on this: "This sort of factual analysis is badly needed...we hope that other people (will) undertake the same sort of work..." The work referred to was a survey by W E Styler of two years' programmes in the Manchester Extra-mural Department, analysing enrolments by age and choice of subject. The figures are interesting - in a programme of social sciences, arts and some science (biology, psychology) a slight majority of male students is reported. The conclusions drawn emphasise the decline in "educationally underprivileged" students.

The volumes of *Adult Education* in the early Fifties are revealing in various ways. There is a regular feature on reports on classroom experience and innovation from tutors. Its title of "News From the Field" is I think highly illuminating in its hint of a metaphor of field staff "out there" somehow getting their reports back to London Centre. But then the War had only been over for a few years, and post-war reconstruction was the order of the day. Articles on practice invariably refer to both student and tutor as "he" - an unvarying use of male gender language which casts a quaintness over the whole. The following is a typical example:

"to stimulate him into finding his own bridges between the separate "subjects" which he finds in his head". (ibid:173)

Elsewhere in the Fifties issues of the journal are sprinklings of wonderful idiosyncratic writing. In an article entitled "Poetry for a Naval Audience" the author "A Staff Tutor" describes an experiment in bringing poetry to "a conscripted audience" in which "ratings outnumbered Wrens about six to one." He reads poems to the students "as well as a smoker's throat permitted" and gets them voting on the relative merits of Marvell's "Coy Mistress" and Herrick's "Gather ye Rosebuds" (A Staff Tutor, 1951:15).

A great charm of Adult Education in these years is its cheerfully eclectic editorial practice. Items of news and personalia are interspersed; there is the occasional real surprise such as the text of a student essay or a snatch of verse; reviews in this decade are likely to be of subject-specialist texts which might be useful in book boxes. This editorial good nature is nicely expressed in 1952 in a reflection on the 25th year of publication:

"We need to have our hearts lifted as well as our minds cleared, and we should be dull indeed without the stir of controversy and the boldness of speculation." (*Adult Education*, 1952:64)

It is, by coincidence, in that same issue that the most significant controversy of the Fifties surfaces. Christened "the Great Debate" by Ross Waller in an article the following year, the tone of this famous dispute, begun by Raybould in 1951, is excellently preserved in Adult Education, and for readers in 1995 has a curious familiarity, since the heart of the debate was definition of university quality and the maintaining of standards.

Robert Peers, Director and DVC at Nottingham, contributed an article opposing Raybould's claim of the superiority of the three-year tutorial class. Peers' prose does not lend itself to passion or flourish, but he does end his piece with a significant claim:

"Adult education is no longer to be regarded as the last resource of the educationally under-privileged, but as the new hope of an educated democracy." (Peers, 1952:95).

Raybould replied in the next issue, arguing with vehemence against Peers, and challenging his own notions of quality. He attacks Peers on his own ground - how can he really believe his Nottingham part-time tutors are of real "quality"?

"How is it possible for men and women who besides taking extra-mural classes in a part-time capacity also presumably hold full-time appointments in other walks of life, and in many cases have domestic and other responsibilities, to keep 'in touch with the development of their own subject'...?"(Raybould, 1952:173)

For the following issue Waller is persuaded to play the referee "with some reluctance and only at the editor's request." He plays his role deftly, and as an English Literature specialist effortlessly finds the Fair Field Full of Folk in Piers Plowman when in need of an image for adult education, especially the line

"And a lady lovely to look on came from that castle down."

The castle is the University and the lady is Truth "the lamp, touchstone and criterion of the Universities' work." (Waller, 1953:255)

Another debate whose rhetoric is preserved in Adult Education came later in the decade, immediately after the Ashby Report on funding. Ashby had in J.A. Blyth's words "broken with the tradition that only liberal education would be supported by the State" (Blyth 1958:305). Eric Ashby himself, after the publication of the Report, wrote with candour about his belief in the creativity of technology:

"To rave about Gothic churches and Tudor town halls and not even glance at Viscount aeroplanes and stressed concrete bridges cannot be justified" (ibid:304)

To some this was an assault on the canon of adult education just as Peers had assaulted the canonical status of the tutorial class. Harold Wiltshire, the protagonist, defines the Great Tradition thus:

"its interest is not in learning for learning's sake but in learning as a means of understanding the great issues of life, and its typical student is not the scholar, the solitary, the scientist or the saint: its typical student is the reflective citizen." (Wiltshire, 1956:88)

Wiltshire's impassioned language places him in what seems to me to be an interesting relationship both with the essential conservatism of Raybould's discourse, and yet with the educated democracy of Peers. Certainly his title is highly self-consciously borrowed from Leavis, that other and more notorious custodian of true cultural values.

This is the age of the adult educator with a literary training, and time and again I find an intriguing undertow tugging at my own (now less fashionable) literariness. I have referred to Robert Peers' ready citation of Medieval satire. Two other examples are illuminating.

Wiltshire's Great Tradition piece appeared in Autumn 1956; the next issue saw a riposte by Philip Collins, Dickens scholar and then Warden of Vaughan College, Leicester. Collins finds Wiltshire behind the times, especially in his disapproval of what we now call accreditation:

"And if I compare a Certificate course with the average traditional class, my main impression is not of constriction as against freedom and joy (my italics); rather, I find the Certificate courses very similar to the non-certificate, except that their members tend to work harder, better and with greater continuity, and that some of them might not have attended unless a Certificate were offered." (Collins, 1956:168)

This reference to joy is very Wordsworthian. The imagination is the prime agent of human perception, and its operation produces the (elevated) feeling of Joy. or, as Wordsworth put it in "Tintern Abbey"

"While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things" (48-50)

The Wordsworthian tone continues. Collins continues his argument in favour of certification:

"Other members certainly hope that the Certificate will enable them to improve their performance in their jobs or in their voluntary activities in social or religious work...but these aims, though perhaps inferior to a disinterested love of knowledge, are by no means ignoble..." (ibid:168)

This to the literary adult educator can only suggest these lines from Book I of The Prelude, in which the poet reflects on his youthful offences against nature by bird-nesting:

> "Though mean
> My object, and inglorious, yet the end
> Was not ignoble..."

My second example is from a young research assistant at the National Institute who was to become a leading voice in the next decade as television took hold of leisure. This was Brian Groombridge, who began a major essay entitled "New Objectives for Adult Education" with:

"Anxiety is not the exclusive preserve of the Twentieth Century poets and novelists. When research workers fully explore the angst-ridden literature of recent years, the thorough ones will include the writings of British adult educationists in their surveys" (Groombridge, 1957:197).

A new vision for adult education is possible, he argues, and his tone becomes almost Messianic:

"For this inspiration it would be unwise to await the coming of a Mansbridge II" (ibid).

The tone here is not Wordsworth but Yeats, one might think, and sure enough in the final section of his paper Groombridge finds an image from Yeats for an ageing population without educational opportunity:

"An aged man is but a paltry thing
A tattered coat upon a stick"
("Sailing to Byzantium" 1-2).

In the absence of the second coming of Mansbridge, Groombridge finds his own messianic - or at least revivalist - language:

"Adult education will progress in the coming decades because society as a whole, and not merely segregated sections such as the underprivileged, will create problems needing the co-operation of various forms of adult education in their solution. Hitherto it has been possible for society to blunder on, leaving it to a small demi-chorus of devotees to intone eternal truths about education for life and adult education for all" (ibid).

Groombridge is a good name for modulating into the different culture of the 1960s, where he becomes the sage of a televisual culture with which the great tradition has to come to terms. Increasingly in this bright new decade Adult Education addresses the impact of new technology: use of television broadcasts in adult teaching; closed circuit television as a teaching and training aid; the development of special broadcasts for an adult student audience, standing conferences on television viewing. And, of course, the original vision of the University of the Air grows steadily through these years into the Open University, whose Planning Committee is enthusiastically reported.

The first issue of the sixties is prescient in its editorial policy - it is entirely given over to international contributions. From a 1990s perspective there is a strong impression of the discovery of new lands: suddenly there is a whole world out there. This is reinforced by an addition to the regular news features in the journal: "News From Abroad". From a slightly shaky start with a report of the demise of the WEA in the Sudan, this feature increases in the following years, noting major initiatives in the development of adult education structures and programmes, especially in Africa. Under personalia we learn that, for example, Paul Fordham is leaving his post as resident tutor for the area of mid-Derbyshire for that of Buganda (*Adult Education*, 1961:212) ; two years later he contributes an article on "The English Tradition" in East Africa.

The new decade opens also with the conversion of Adult Education from a quarterly journal to one with six issues per year. The editorial explanation explains this by the rapid expansion of the whole activity, and thus the need for a more rapid turnover of comment and report. The culture is, however, changing in other ways: "News from the Field" is dropped in 1966 for "Professional Interests", thus losing its cold war tone. Now too we find that reviews are more likely to be of books on adult learning than on subjects for students, and to be of American rather than British authorship.

The 1960s is the decade of expansion of the curriculum. Modern languages appears, representing 3% of the national curriculum in 1962 in which year a whole issue is devoted to this topic, prefaced by an editorial proselytising on the virtues of being good Europeans. Science too gets a whole issue in 1962, revealing that the 650 courses in 1960/61 represent a doubling of provision from ten years previously.

If the fifties were characterised by debate on the supremacy of the tutorial class the sixties emerges in Adult Education as the decade of the professionalising and theorising of practice. A review of Verners's Adult Education is illuminating:

"Here is an attempt to draw out of the confusion of the field, the guesses of practitioners, and the piecemeal research available, a coherent area of study and discussion that can be called a discipline of adult education." (*Adult Education*, 1964: 89) This hammering out of a discipline with a research base is a growing phenomenon, beginning perhaps with Raymond Williams protesting at the English dislike of theory in 1961.

But one development that falls within my period - though admittedly only just - goes unreported in the pages of Adult Education. This is the foundation of SCUTREA in 1969/70. No mention is made of SCUTREA until 1974, by which time four annual conferences had taken place. The September issue of that year reports this Conference, where amid "admirable hospitality and sunlit gardens" discussion proved occasionally "explosive".

The end of my period for review marks not only the foundation of SCUTREA but the fragmentation of reporting and publishing into an ever-increasing number of more specialist journals. Adult Education did of course continue publication for many years, but after 1970 it lost that all-encompassing synoptic coverage which makes it so valuable a source before that date.

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Participative environmental research and the role of continuing education

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Introduction

Environmental pressure groups are increasingly using scientific as well as moral and emotional arguments to support and legitimise their position (Yearley, 1992). However, such a policy comes at a price as scientific research is expensive to commission. In the area of ecology and nature conservation especially, environmental pressure groups can call on the resource of their own members to collect information about the numbers and distribution of biotic communities in threatened habitats. This process takes advantage of a long tradition of amateur interest in natural history in the UK where the study of nature, fossils and geology became one of the most popular pastimes amongst Victorians.

However, the use of volunteer resources is not without problems. To gain the greatest value from the volunteer input it must be properly managed which itself requires resources. The value of the scientific information depends on the skills and knowledge of the volunteers in both collecting, recording, displaying and interpreting data. The value of any data collection exercise must also depend on volunteers remaining sufficiently motivated to maintain their efforts over long time periods and feel part of a process rather than a source of free labour. Indeed it could be argued that the most cohesive arguments for conservation of a local area are made when a local community spontaneously realises the value to itself of a local copse or pond rather than when an environmental group launches a campaign bandwagon.

Continuing education has a key role to play in maximising the effectiveness of a large non-professional input into the collection of scientific data, a vital part of the process of indicating nature conservation 'value'. Through improving skills of sampling and species identification and in keeping records, continuing education can allow volunteers to take a greater control of the process of science they are engaged in, rather than simply acting as data collectors. This includes developing scientific hypotheses, manipulating data, carrying out statistical analysis and presenting results to support a nature conservation argument which is relevant to them in their locality or community.

Ison (1993) has coined the term 'participative ecodesign' whilst describing how farmers and communities became involved in agricultural research and development programmes. Participative ecological research organised between environmental groups and local communities - ideally initiated by local communities - is an important method allowing for local communities to gain a role and a voice over decisions about their local environment. Such participation provides a function for continuing education; allowing communities speak the same 'language' as experts and to interpret the results of their own scientific enquiry in the context of a scientific understanding of ecology and the environment and the value of nature.

The need for scientific information

In order to save an area valued by a community for its nature conservation and/or recreational value, or to criticise a specific policy such as agricultural set-aside environmental groups underpin their moral arguments with support from the law, especially the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and increasingly European Union legislation such as the Habitats Directive and international agreements such as the Biodiversity Treaty signed at Rio in 1992.

These laws work by giving 'value' to wildlife and landscapes (Usher, 1986). It is therefore important to know what plant and animal communities are present, especially rare or endangered species. Similarly land that is already protected as a local nature reserve or community conservation area will need management plans which must take into account what biotic communities are present. The success or otherwise of the implementation of a management plan can be determined by measuring its effect on specific plant and animal communities through continued monitoring of the numbers and distribution of living organisms (Spellerberg, 1991).

Perhaps the best and longest running systematic use of volunteer labour in ecological monitoring comes from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), responsible for collating and interpreting the information provided by many thousands of birdwatchers around the country.

British Trust for Ornithology

Set up in 1932 BTO can now boast approximately 10,000 members in the UK, generating over one million person hours of field research effort. They cannot be defined specifically as an environmental pressure group because the information they collect is not used in campaigning and is freely available to all. The greatest volunteer effort goes into the annual breeding bird survey, the nest record scheme and the ringing scheme. The continuous monitoring of data over long timescales can provide strong evidence for trends in bird species which may be related to changes in climate, agricultural practice or a combination of factors. The key point is that these very powerful datasets have been collected by volunteers.

This in itself can cause problems. For example, how good is the data collected? Criticism in the past of BTO census techniques led to official vindication by an enquiry of the then Nature Conservancy Council and Institute of Terrestrial Ecology.

Second, as an organisation such as BTO becomes successful tension can develop between an increasingly professional staff of both scientists and administrators and the amateur members of the organisation, a relationship which must be managed carefully.

Despite these problems Taylor (1989) comments "the co-operative nature of the BTO's interests, bringing together fine-scale professional skills and large scale enthusiastic amateur fieldwork... may in some ways offer the best mechanism for long-term and large scale ecology". Of course local communities are more interested in their own patch of land, i.e. small scale rather than large scale ecology. The implications of this are discussed in the next section.

National versus local ecological monitoring and research

An analysis of the success of BTO raises several issues. Not only are volunteers concentrated geographically in the South-East of England, but generally, the interests of keen natural historians are focused very much on birds, flowering plants, butterflies and moths. These groups have the largest datasets at the Biological Records Centre, collected for use in mapping the distribution of species across the UK, usually on a 10 km grid pattern (Harding and Sheail, 1992). Other groups of organisms such as lichens or flies have their adherents, but those with an interest in these groups tend to be called 'experts' or 'specialists', even if they are amateurs, reflecting the few numbers of people interested in these groups.

Whilst no one can deny the importance of conserving highly visible species in their own right, or using them as indicator species, this focus can have important consequences when considering biodiversity as a whole. Management based on data collected from birds, flowering plants and butterflies may tend to benefit those species only, perhaps to the detriment of less conspicuous species, such as wood decomposing organisms, a case strongly argued by Hambler and Speight (1995).

Nature conservation evaluation and monitoring are therefore key processes that local communities need to engage in if the future of a local conservation area, be it a wood, copse, meadow or river bank, is to be secured. This requires a small-scale whole site approach with many species being covered, not just those that are highly visible. It is here that continuing education can have an important role.

Continuing Education and Community Action

How can continuing education play a role in facilitating local people to become involved in conserving their local conservation area through an understanding of what plant and animal species are present? One approach is in participative research. This is a very different approach to examples where non-specialists become involved in research being directed by experts, such as the study on bumblebee habitat requirements co-ordinated by Fussell and Corbet (1991).

Ison (1993) describes some guiding principles about participative research or 'ecodesign' involving pastoralist communities of rural Australia, listed in table one.

Such principles are equally relevant to the role volunteers have in carrying out ecological research in a local habitat in a continuing education context. The process described below is similar to the approach recommended by Hall (1981) as part of the democratisation of research:

1. Continuing education classes may represent a non-threatening way for environmental groups, local amateur experts and members of the local community to get together and discuss issues surrounding the conservation of a local area.

2. The expertise of those contributing to national recording schemes such as those organised by BTO can be focused onto a local area and skills in identification shared with others in a supportive environment.

3. The ecological role and significance of less obvious organisms such as those of the decomposer community - woodlice, millipede, earthworms and fungi - can be explained and placed in the context of the inter-related web of life which includes the more well-known birds and plants.

4. Skills in the identification of more obscure organisms can be taught. This is being made easier by the development of a series of simple and easy to use keys which have been

TABLE ONE

Some guiding principles for participative research with communities
Adapted from Ison (1993).

1. Projects have the potential for more mutually satisfying outcomes when an invitation is extended to participate, and the resultant communication is based on conversations which acknowledge each person's experience as unique and valid.

2. it is important to understand that experience and knowledge are related to context and that it is necessary to attempt to appreciate particular contexts.

3. enthusiasm, which may be triggered, appears to be an emotional state predisposing individuals to action which is meaningful to that individual.

4. matters which individuals are keen to take action on may or may not concur with 'experts'.

5. pursuit of these matters in an open collaborative and critically informed ways can lead to locally meaningful and adaptive changes.

6. knowledge is both individually and socially constructed and because of this, processes are necessary to create learning networks.

7. diversity of experience, knowledge and research is an asset of equal importance to conservation of local environments.

developed after extensive testing by school, college, university and adult groups as part of the AIDGAP project (aid to the identification of difficult groups of plants and animals) (Tilling, 1984). A recent example is a guide to identifying woodlice (Hopkins, 1991).

5. An ability to relate the number and diversity of organisms present with other methods of evaluating the value of an area (ie a landscape evaluation or historical perspective) can be developed.

6. Skills in presenting a case for the preservation of an area, for example in the context of a planning enquiry or local campaign can be gained. This may include an understanding of graphical presentation and statistical analysis.

7. Within a local group priorities for managing a local conservation area can be examined and management related to continued monitoring of species present as evidence of the efficacy or otherwise of management such as the clearing away of invasive species such as laurel in woodland.

8. Developing and maintaining an enthusiasm for natural history and nature conservation amongst community members which will allow for the long-term commitment for such projects.

Of course the future prospects of local conservation areas require a commitment from local residents which go far beyond the local ecological research described here. Grants can be obtained to repair footbridges, build paths, buy tools etc. Volunteers to carry out conservation tasks will need to be organised and issues such as vandalism and litter need to be addressed.

Such work is vital and in Hampshire is supported by a group entitled Greenspace, funded by the Hampshire County Council and the Countryside Commission whose motto is 'community action for the environment'. Their work is strongly commended. However, there is much scope for community members to become as much involved in scientific research and monitoring as in a litter picking or pond clearing activity, to use the process of scientifically 'valuing' their wildlife to protect it and gain a better understanding of their own patch of biodiversity.

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Making a mark: research as a community benefit

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This paper arises from a research project carried out by a community worker as part of a Master's degree at Leeds University (Lee-Mak, 1992), which focused on women in the local Chinese community.

The Chinese community constitutes the third largest ethnic minority community in Britain, after those originating in the West Indian and the Indian Sub-continent. Yet the Chinese communities face a series of problems which have gone largely unnoticed because, 'we are not a vocal community' (Home Office, 1985). This silence is due to poor English language skills among the community and the type of occupations in which they are concentrated, which do not afford much contact with the host community. This in turn is rooted in their history of immigration.

The Chinese in Britain are mainly from the New Territories of Hong Kong and most worked as farmers before coming here. The agricultural depression of the 1950s coincided with a time of population increase. The migrants came to England in response to the growth in the catering trade. They had minimal education if any, and this is especially true of the women, who played a vital part in labour-intensive arable farming and also bore major domestic responsibilities from a very early age (Raw and Baxter, 1988). Education was not essential to their ability to earn a living.

Most of the Chinese who came in the 1960s were holders of vouchers permitting them to work in the catering trade. The employer applied on behalf of the intending immigrant, and sponsorships of this type often came from a relative who had a job to offer. This type of sponsorship tied the worker, who might be a farmer back home, to the catering trade. Another factor which prevented the Chinese from seeking work in other sectors was the language barrier, as most could not speak English on arrival. This situation did not improve, as the nature of their work meant that they rarely had the time or inclination to mix socially with the host community. 75% of teenagers communicate with their parents in Chinese, as English is not widely understood by parents (Parker, 1995). First-language literacy levels are as low as 50% (Linguistic Minorities Project, 1985), and this can in turn affect motivation and capacity to learn English. Women are less likely either to be literate or to learn English than men, who also have more contact with the host community.

Women were chosen as the focus of my study because their experiences had not been documented so widely. This may be due to their low status in Chinese society, which has meant that researchers are more likely to speak to men; in Watson's (1977) research, for example, all of the interviewees were men, and Parker (1995) also suggests that the media portrayal of the Chinese focuses on men. Teenage girls often lack the parental support given to boys to achieve academically; many are told: ' girls are no use and you're only going to get married anyway.' This negative view of women and girls seems more overt among the working class, who have experienced little formal education in their home country. Chinese women are by tradition not expected to make decisions. From birth a girl has to obey her father, when she marries she has to obey her husband, then when her husband dies, she obeys her son. It is usually the father's decision to deny girls an education (Lim, 1981;

Baxter and Raw, 1988). In extreme cases 'it is not desirable for women to have a good education as it is believed that this endangers their role of being a good mother and a faithful wife.' (Chan, 1986:4). Their lack of opportunity to learn English or anything else, due to long hours in the Chinese takeaway, ensures they remain isolated and dependent on their husbands (Baxter and Raw, 1988). This has caused much domestic violence and abuse to go unrecorded. I felt a strong need to document these women's educational needs, otherwise the vital information and evidence that could form the framework for future services would be lost.

The Chinese community is popularly seen as self sufficient (Chan, 1986: Home Affairs Committee, 1985). This perception disguises the needs of a politically-silenced community. Lack of English has made it difficult for most Chinese to use their votes for collective benefit. Many see inferior treatment as the norm, not having heard of equal opportunities policies or of other means of exercising their rights. Their needs have sometimes been highlighted in research papers, but this has not generally resulted in any improvement in their quality of life. The process of helping the Chinese community to take collective action in its own interests is clearly a difficult and long-term one.

I have built up a good rapport with the group in this study, because I also come from the New Territories of Hong Kong. My knowledge of provision in the New Territories has helped to overcome the problem of the interviewees' unfamiliarity with educational terminology. I am also a native speaker of Hakka, and although most of the published and unpublished studies about Chinese people in Britain have assumed Cantonese to be the language spoken by Hong Kong Chinese, this may be a fallacy. In the eight years that I have been a Chinese community worker, both in Hull and in Leeds, the majority of Chinese catering workers I met have been native speakers of Hakka rather than Cantonese. This is confirmed by the findings of the Linguistic Minorities Project (1985), where the Coventry sample had Hakka as their spoken vernacular. Lai (1975) also observed the prevalence of Hakka among Chinese from the New Territories.

Cantonese is widely spoken amongst city dwellers, and is also the usual medium of teaching, as noted by Chan (1986). Many of the native Cantonese speakers in Britain originally came here to further their studies (Lai, 1975), and are therefore unlikely to need targeted educational provision. In the New Territories, however, Hakka and its dialects are more widely spoken. Hakka speakers are often stigmatised by city dwellers as being less well educated. There is evidence that survey respondents claim their home language is Cantonese, actually learned at school, in order to impress the interviewer (Law, 1989). They are also likely to teach their children Cantonese in order to improve their employment prospects; Hakka usage is very limited outside of the family. This research, carried out by a native Hakka speaker and a community worker, may have avoided some of the difficulties experienced by previous researchers (Watson, 1977; Chan, 1986; Lai, 1975; Parker, 1995), who were not living in the community they were studying and did not speak Hakka with those interviewed. Similarly their experience as established academics would not have familiarised them with the lives of Chinese restaurateurs, whereas I am the child of a restaurateur and have shared many of their experiences. I therefore had an advantage of sorts, although I was aware of the dangers of 'insider' research and the extent to which my

own background affected my perceptions. My position as a Chinese woman within the community also created particular difficulties - for example in terms of etiquette and confidentiality - which would not have been faced by 'outsiders'.
The research, carried out through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, suggested that :

1. Provision under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966, intended for local residents, was primarily being taken up by the wives of overseas students at Leeds University, most of whom had received advanced education in Mainland China. This was in line with the commonly-observed phenomenon of those with the most previous education being the most likely to take up further opportunities.

2. The family catering business was the only livelihood available to the Chinese women in the survey. Their husbands had come to Britain via the voucher system, and they lacked the language skills to move into other areas of work. Even though the younger generation have largely overcome the language barrier, family ignorance of the wider job market and the necessity (especially for girls) of helping in the business after school (Simpson 1987, Parker, 1995) means they rarely succeed in obtaining mainstream jobs. Although women and children contribute to the economic production of the business, their contribution is not recognised. Family membership automatically means helping out in the business. Some families also faced the problem of husbands gambling the profits away, rather than improving the family's living conditions. This is often blamed on the absence of other leisure pursuits. This way of life isolates them from mainstream society, which in turn leads to ignorance of many of the opportunities available to them, education being an important example.

3. Most of the women did not feel that learning English would improve their vocational mobility; the only perceived benefit was that they would be able to understand more about their children's education and communicate with both schools and their own children. The majority did not want their children to go into catering, which accounts for the particular interest in their education. For the older respondents, however, these aspirations had not been realised.

4. The Chinese women knew nothing of adult education apart from English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, because community educators had provided them with nothing else. The needs of Chinese people had been decided for them in the belief that English was their principle requirement for life in Britain. This is clearly a naive and narrow viewpoint given the equally vital learning about decision-making structures, cultural issues, welfare rights etc., which could be achieved without proficiency in English, and one which reflects a well-meaning institutional racism common in public services. In this respect the Chinese community has been worse served than some other ethnic minority groups.

5. Some of the women expressed a fear of learning any more than was strictly necessary. They were conscious that education, for example by opening up access to support services for women suffering from domestic violence, could increase the likelihood of their leaving a violent relationship. This would lead to isolation and alienation from the community; there is a dilemma about whether learning to become

independent is good, or whether it is treading a dangerous path. It was clear in the study that the women saw no way of breaking out of their traditional role and lacked any role models for alternative ways of life.

Chinese restaurants were the only point of social contact for the community in Leeds. Some local research had been done to highlight the general needs of Chinese people (Law 1989) but the community itself needed to mobilise in order to obtain funding for a Chinese Community Centre. I began to approach various interest groups in the community, and was told that they had been attempting for well over twenty years to persuade the local authority to provide such a place. This was documented by the Home Affairs Committee (1985), but despite the lobbying and research there was still no Centre. I felt a duty to put the Hakka-speaking Chinese community on the agenda before it became history, so I joined representatives of the community association in funding bids. When evidence of need was requested, I presented my research report and further information on the needs of groups within the community. The fact that I was myself Chinese, combined with the academic nature of my evidence, lent legitimacy to these representations. I was also able to help by obtaining expert help with financial forecasting and operational planning to support funding applications, something which the community's limited understanding of and dealings with official bodies rendered problematic. The first Chinese community centre opened in April 1995. The research has also been used as evidence of Chinese community care needs by the local Social Services department (Sells, 1994), which may lead to increased take-up of existing services and an improvement in targeted services.

Although I did not set out to achieve these outcomes at the beginning of my study, I feel that they have been unexpectedly positive. I was able to use my academic work to make Hakka speakers and Chinese women visible, and to play a facilitating role in the Chinese Community Association. This would have been a difficult task without the qualifications I hold and the academic research I was engaged in, since the Association management committee is made up of 90% Chinese men. Many of them still see women as inferior, although this may change when they see that the centre relies on so many women volunteers. Two successful projects, the Chinese elderly group and women's group, now hold weekly meetings and attract some 100 participants each week. For those involved, this is the only contact with the world outside their home or takeaway. It is through these meetings that public sector services are taken up, through Chinese advice workers giving them information face-to-face. Many public service organisations provide only Asian language support for their services, and the Chinese are not catered for. However it is to be hoped that the visibility of the community will now increase with the community centre providing a focus, and collective action to obtain better services tailored to the community's needs will become easier. This is particularly important in view of the possible increase in the local population when Hong Kong reverts to Chinese control. The community has now realised that it has a place on the public service agenda and is becoming more able to make its voice heard.

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The creative management of biography: a strategy of survival and resistance for one black researcher

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1: We swim in the same stream:

It has never been easy being black and living in the United Kingdom. When black people have said this , it has always been difficult for some white colleagues to fully comprehend what they really mean. To be an outsider within. To be present and yet be invisible. To have a voice and yet be denied an opportunity to be heard. It is not easy to have to constantly 'fight' other people's definitions, expectations and stereotypes of one's self. And yet, this is the daily life experience of many black people in Britain today. It is therefore not surprising that education institutions seem to mirror what is going on in society generally. It is no wonder therefore, that there are few black scholars in Higher Education today. I am one of the few, one of the few heroes and sheroes who have survived the British education system. This paper is about my journey into the world of academic research . It is a journey that is not too dissimilar from that of white working class, women, gay and lesbian, and students with disability. The feeling of being disconnected, alienated, marginalised, temporary and peripheral. When in this paper, I focus attention on the lived-experiences of black researchers, it does not mean that I do not recognise and acknowledge the interrelationship that exists between the struggles against racism and the struggles against other forms of oppression on the grounds of one's class, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation. On the contrary , it is from individuals , groups and writers with lived experiences of these other forms of oppression that I draw ideas, inspiration, support and strength from. We swim in the same stream. In this paper I wish to demonstrate an understanding of the way in which through my research I have sought to make connections with my biography and the search for self as a learning process.

2: Spilling it out on paper: a) Telling the Journal: turning one's life experiences into positive action.

Learning the process of externalising anger to shape the research endeavour and in order to be creative and research. My journey really begun the day I decided that I wanted to do a PhD. I had completed a part-time MA programme at the Centre of Race and Ethnic Relations at Warwick University in 1988. My dissertation which was on "The Education provision of Unemployed Black adults in the East Midlands", took an institutional focus using standard interviews and quantitative research methods. I felt I had not sufficiently thought through or critically reflected on my MA research topic and method. I needed to revisit this area of study at a later stage. To focus on the perceived barriers and education experiences of African-Caribbean students in Sheffield. To listen to the voices and stories of the heroes and sheroes, the survivors of the education system. To work in a more participatory and collaborative way with my subjects. To find new methods and new forms of researching which did not further marginalise groups who felt on the periphery of society and academic research. As a parent of three young growing children, a community activist, and a lecturer in an Access

Programme at Sheffield College, I had no choice but to register for my PhD with the local Division of Adult and Continuing Education, at Sheffield University. Who would supervise this research? Who were the academic staff within the Division with a lived experience of Being black and working in the area of education? Who was the leading black Professor with an Afro-centric perspective from whom one could draw inspiration, knowledge and support from? None. Despair, frustration, anxiety and self-doubt were my constant companions. Probably I better not bother, in any case why do I need a PhD? What is the value of this if in practice institutions do not provide students with relevant support? To carry out a serious piece of research using an Afro-centric perspective as a conceptual and theoretical tool, within a context of a white, male dominated academic institution is demoralising and makes one feel angry, isolated, and marginalised. It is then that I started writing my journal as *confession* (Ngungi Wa Thiong'o, 1992) of my inner feelings and thoughts. The journal became a vehicle for me to define and set my agenda, to listen and hear my voice, to see myself in my own image, to have space to argue, question , reflect, and that process be healed.

b) Trapped by Methodologies: frustrations and false starts. Asking questions who am I? How did I get here? Where do I want to be? How do I want to get there? I thought I was equipped to handle a research study at PhD level. I had taken a very interesting course on Research Methods. I was keen, I read all the recommended books. On reflection I feel I *was carried on by the flow of the tide.* For many years the British and American social sciences have been dominated by the logical positivist tradition, which resulted in a lack of critical reflection about methodology when it comes to researching black and other oppressed communities. As I read all the standard Research Methods texts I became aware of the absence of culturally relevant methodologies. The more I read the more I became confused and disillusioned. Most of the research studies on black people often have been preceded by a priori ideological and cultural bias that determine the production of *objective knowledge.* What John Stanfield (1993) calls *social and cultural stereotypes and presumptions derived from historically specific folk wisdom.* Examples of this are the desecration of aboriginal and native American graves in the advancement of anthropology ; the use of inner-city poor in public health research ; the exclusion of black people both as researchers and as subjects from playing significant decision making roles in research projects, which has profound implications on the knowledge produced. Who we are affects our writing. Our life history of experiences; encounters and opportunities; hopes, fears and disappointments; values, beliefs and world views; our personalities, anxieties and desires; tensions and contradictions in our lives, all have a bearing on our writing. (Aitchison, M: Ivanic, R: Weldon, S 1994) writing , like living itself, is not a neutral activity, but it implicates every fibre of our multifaceted being.

I was searching for a methodology for my purpose, a methodology consistence with my biography. Using an anti-oppressive research method requires a fundamental rethink of one's values and relationships. From my biography I knew that those who have had personal experiences of particular oppression have a perspective which gives them *potentially* greater understanding of it. I began seeking new friends amongst black, women, disabled, working class, and gay and lesbian writers, with multiple experiences of oppression, in order to find new methods and perspectives to carry out my research. An anti-oppressive ethic/methodology demands an understanding of personal values and the connection of these personal values to life histories of people. This led me settle for a participatory research method using subjects' biographies to reflect on their past educational experiences. There is evidence of a growing interest in the use of biography as a research method. The Journal of the British Sociological Association recently devoted the whole edition to biography and autobiography (vol 27, No.1 February, 1993). The biography (Inglis, 1994) is one way people tell stories of themselves which captures the historical essence of their time. There is also a strong Life History network within the European Society for Research on Education of Adults, which has generated a diversity of writing, theoretical as well as multi-disciplinary in the last two years. In September 1994 the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Sussex, held a conference on *Life Histories and Learning.* Likewise there is a mushrooming of interest in autobiographical inspired / life history research in North America as exemplified in some papers at a recent conference of the Canadian Association for Study of Adult Education (CASAE) in May 1994.

We should not separate oneself as a researcher from the day-to-day lived experiences of marginalised groups. We should not create an ontology or world view in which the 'knower' is detached from the world rather than implicated within it (Ash, 1992). It is possible to carry out research with people if we engage with them as persons, as co-subjects and thus as co-researchers. The Lesbian Oral History Group in their book Inventing Ourselves (1989) decided to *record lesbians talking about their lives because we wanted to contribute to the history of lesbians, to question the past, with ourselves as subjects, and to witness each others lives.* Part of the importance of using biography as a research tool for marginalised groups is that , *it is not only about the search for the truth but to heal,* (Bell Hooks, 1993).

3) Taking Control: Claiming the right to be my own methodologist: The Biography as a research method has a commitment to giving a voice, space and encouragement, and in short to empower those on the margins. Celebrating diversity, a plurality of perspectives, and the partiality of all-knowing is the key to biographical research. Trying to find new metaphors, radical and diverse ways of understanding, new ways of collaboration ad mutual support, *including and honouring* the subjects of research .

Ethical issues are central to any research enterprise, but more so when researchers are researching oppressed and marginalised groups. There is a need to build more inclusive research by incorporating the experiences and perspectives in all the stages of the research process. To begin to share these ideas I was involved with a number of black students in setting up an African Centred Research Group, which acted as a support group for all black post-graduate students. As a result of this the group has organised a International Conference in September 1995, to look at Afro-Centric perspectives when researching Black communities. This is in line with feminist stand-point theories, which assert that oppressed and marginalised groups have unique viewpoints on their own experiences. The biography *preserves the presence of the active and experiencing* *subject.* (D.E. Smith, 1987: 105). Patricia Hill Collins (1986) argues that the marginality of black feminist scholars gives them a distinct analysis of race, class and gender issues. That we should as researchers learn to read our personal and cultural biographies as significant sources of knowledge. As "outsiders within" black scholars use the tensions in their cultural identities to generate new ways of seeing and reflecting. This suggests that white scholars intending to do research race issues, should examine self-consciously the influences of institutional racism and the way it shapes the formulation and development of their research, rather than assume a colour-blind approach. As researchers we should not deny the influence of our status , be it race, gender, class or other social status in the shaping of knowledge. It requires that we see ourselves as ""situated in the action of our research" (Rapp, 1983) examining our own social location, not just that of those we study. Building more inclusive ways of seeing requires scholars to take a multiple view of their subjects. Research is a journey of self-discovery, self- recovery, and self-examination. We should develop research methods and practices that acknowledge and take as central the class, race and gender relations in which researchers and research subjects are situated. We should question assumptions that the knower is the ultimate authority on the lives of those whom she or he studies. We should not assume that white researchers are unable to generate research with black people as research subjects. However, we must be aware that to do so, white researchers must work in ways that acknowledges and challenges racism and white privilege and questions how racism and such privilege may shape their research practice. It is important, as Peter Reason (1994) points out that , *we need to conduct research with people rather than on people , that we use inclusive research methods that allow the researcher or subject to inquire together into their experience and their practice.* It is what Paulo Freire (1970) was advocating in his work with marginalised groups, *to empower people through the research process.*

5) Reflections: Interweaving the past and present for future goals. a) Survival: as increased understanding of ones ontological position in a racist society and improved strategies in personal, professional and community sphere. For researchers coming from oppressed and marginalised groups, there is a *need to write in order to record our version of history (*Bryan B, Dadzie S, and Scaffe S, 1986). Creative management of one's biography can be a way of exploring what we already know in order to help perceive and understand what we do not know. As we seek greater understanding of ourselves, our relationships, searching for meaningfulness in our lives, by looking at what we do know of ourselves, and rearranging this knowledge in a creative way, we can perhaps begin to *discover more* and make sense of *the whole of our experiences.* Through writing *we can begin to* heal inner wounds , to release the bitterness we hold within us , so that we have a sense of inner harmony and peace.

b) Resistance: as increased visibility in the academic sphere through the research; the formation of African Centred Research Group; attending and organising Conferences; challenging University policies and educational practices; developing national and international networks; making connections with other researchers coming from and writing on oppressed and marginalised groups; developing support of what

Hazel Hampton calls *critical friends.* I was also was fortunate to have Professor William A. Hampton as my supervisor, someone who was keen on new paradigms and had long history of working with the African and Caribbean community in Sheffield. He set up a Research Group made up of all his six PhD students, to explore our biographies and begin support group. At about this time also came a black Afro-centric feminist, Professor Wanda Thomas Bernard, from Dalhousie University, Halifax in Canada. Wanda was doing a PhD at Sheffield University on *Black Men Survival Strategies in the 1990's,* which demonstrated that participatory research can be carried out successfully with black communities, that it can provide personal development , but also be a catalyst for community development. While in most of the writing on participatory research the form, content, disciplinary and theoretical frameworks vary, many echo Edward Thompson's rallying call, to *rescue ordinary people, the poor, the defiant, the utopian, the abused, the unconventional, the marginalised - from the 'enormous condescension of history'* (Thompson, 1964).

As Bell Hooks (1993) clearly put it, *it is important that black people talk to one another, that we talk with friends and allies, for the telling of our stories enables us to name our pain, our suffering, and to seek healing* (Bell Hooks, 1993: 17) . Telling the truth is the first step in any process of self recovery. *Dialogue is itself creative and re-creative* (Friere and Shor, 1987: 3.) We have learnt the art of hiding behind a false appearance. Collective unmasking is an important act of resistance. The biography allows each and everyone of us to redefine ourselves; to write a new story for ourselves; to be self aware and self reflective; to forge alliances, to break barriers and seek deeper forms of relationships and new ways of thinking. Nod Miller wrote: *all social research constitutes an autobiography of the researcher* (Miller & Jones, 1993: 88)It is also true that autobiography is an essential method of social research. In exploring my learning processes I am developing an approach proposed by C.Wright Mills , *to capture what you experience and sort it out* (quote in Miller & Jones, 1993:91.) As experience is multi-layered and complex, and capable of generating different meanings at different times, the task for me is to untangle the various meanings which can be derived, and I see the biography as an ideal medium through which to facilitate this.

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From distance learning to computer supported cooperative learning - a new paradigm for distance learning

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Introduction

This paper aims to provide a vision of a new paradigm for distance learning which is based on values of openness in the learning process, and the development of virtual learning communities which are largely self-determining and self-evaluating. Within adult learning perspectives, this approach illustrates a move towards more egalitarian forms of tutor-learner relationships where the tutor is no longer the sole repository of knowledge but acts as a resource for the learning community, and where learners are engaged in making decisions about what to learn, the design of their learning events, evaluation of the learning events, and collaborative self-peer-tutor assessment of their learning.

My starting point for writing this paper has been my recent experience of taking up a new appointment in a department of adult continuing education which runs "conventional" distance learning MEds. My aim is not to present a critique of distance learning - this has been done elsewhere (for example, see Harris, 1987; Hodgson et al, 1987). Rather, I will make the point that, from my perspective, distance learning courses in adult continuing education have procured the methods and techniques (the educational technology) of conventional distance learning often at the expense of giving up many of the beliefs and values underpinning the contemporary practice of adult learning.

This need not be the case. New information technologies and communication technologies make it possible to retain many of those values while offering a flexible, humane and effective form of distance learning.

The changing nature of distance learning

Distance learning is in the throes of radical change. Two things have brought this about :

* recent events in the evolution of advanced learning technologies now make it possible to design distance learning courses which allow learners and tutors to meet in "virtual" learning environments. In meeting with other learners, we no longer have to be concerned about problems of distance and time. Personal computers now allow us to "meet" in cyberspace, and courses and learning opportunities can be available down the telephone lines.

* values concerning the nature of learning and the role of the tutor are changing. Learners are no longer seen merely as recipients of knowledge. They play an active role in managing their own learning, making choices about what to learn and how to learn. Knowledge is no longer seen as existing independently of the learner. It is constructed in discussion with other learners and tutors.

The term "computer supported cooperative learning" (CSCL) suggests a new paradigm of distance learning. Information technology and communications systems provide an electronic interactive teaching and learning environment where students and tutors have equal access to the learning resources and are able to communicate with one another via the same system.

Two forms of distance learning

Conventional Distance Learning

In reflecting on the nature of conventional distance learning, the often-cited advantages of distance education - flexibility in time, place and pace of learning - can, I feel, be off-set against some possible disadvantages :

* the content of the learning material is largely unilaterally decided upon by academic staff. Students have little if any say in the content of the course. Tutors determine the focus of what is to be addressed as learning and package this into self-study material. The use of behavioural objectives reduces the complexities of learning to a set of pre-defined outcomes.
* knowledge, in this packaged form, is slow to be changed and "up-dated": it often takes several years before changes are made to the material. Yet access to "just in time" knowledge is an increasingly important feature of our society today.
* the form of learning encouraged and awarded is inherently individualistic. The learning arrangement is largely that between
tutor-student. It is difficult to establish contact, interaction and discussion between students as a group, and indeed between the tutor and each individual student. Learning rarely takes place in a social context where students and tutors can discuss, share and explore in-depth issues relating to their learning.
* related to the above is the problem of isolation on distance learning programmes. It is my experience that many learners rate this as one of the major drawbacks, and it is often a reason for students withdrawing from such programmes. It is also the case too that many course providers running such programmes find the experience isolating.
* assessment is unilateral, by the tutor. This has serious implications for the form of learning engaged in, and for the learners' orientation to learning. With control of assessment firmly in the hands of tutors, learners often work instrumentally to seek cues about the best way of passing a course of study, often to the detriment of their learning (Miller and Parlett, 1974; Becker et al, 1968).
* the educational technology of distance learning largely supports a form of positivism in relation to knowledge
(" positivism is a particular kind of 'identity thinking' which tries to grasp and subdue the complexities of reality by imposing definitions and operationalized categories specifically in the interests of control " - Harris, 1987). I would agree with Harris in the argument that, despite good intentions, producers of distance learning packages often engage in "providing technologically productive or suitably realistic social knowledge...a technicization of education" (Harris, 1987).
This form of distance learning has been described as "dissemination" education (Hodgson et al, 1987) in which learners are viewed largely as recipients of others' information and knowledge.

Computer Supported Cooperative Learning (CSCL)

In comparison with conventional distance learning, the starting point of computer supported cooperative learning (CSCL) is the learning interests and concerns of the students, rather than a concern with presenting to students the knowledge and information held by the tutor, or that deemed to be the knowledge of the field of study. CSCL is based on principles of action learning and action research, and might be described more as "development" education.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning (CL) environments differ from traditional learning environments in a variety of ways. A comparison of the two learning environments can help in illuminating differences between them in terms of:

*the processes of learning : between active, problem centred learning (CL) and passive learning, or learning from books.

*the nature of knowledge : that there are different forms of knowledge -for example, personal knowledge gained from real experience (CL), compared with "absolute" knowledge gained from textbooks, academic papers and so on.

*the different ways in which we can gain knowledge : through action learning and research used to construct new knowledge (CL), compared with ways of learning which emphasise that knowledge exists independently of the learner.

*the tutor-learner relationship: relationships based on egalitarianism (CL) rather than those based on authoritarianism and control.

*assessment : assessment based on self, peer and tutor collaboration (CL) rather than one based on unilateral tutor judgements.

Cooperative learning can be highly developmental, engaging the learner in making sense of their learning and in reconstructing knowledge. It emphasises constant critical reflection within a social context where peers and tutors help each other make sense of their learning. By comparison, traditional forms of learning are concerned more with transmitting largely pre-defined forms of knowledge with little if any connection with personal experience and critical reflection.

Beliefs Concerning CSCL

CSCL is a set of beliefs concerning the purposes of learning; the relationships between learner and tutor, and learner-learner; and the use of new advanced information and communication technologies :

* CSCL is based on principles of action learning and action research. The focus of study is largely problem centred (e.g. issues in professional practice; issues in personal, experiential learning). Learners should have as much choice as possible over the direction and content of their learning. They arrive at the focus of their studies through discussion and negotiation with other learners and tutors.

* critical reflective learning in a social context - CSCL technology supports group discussion and the sharing of experience concerning learning. A social, conversational context is important in the process of learning since it supports the clarification of ideas and concepts through discussion; develops critical thinking; provides opportunities for learners to share information and ideas; develops communication skills; provides a context where the learners can take control of their own learning; and provides validation of individuals' ideas and ways of thinking (through conversation, multiple perspectives and argument; McConnell, 1994).

A critical perspective to learning is therefore part of the process of CSCL. The critical perspective derives from reflection on one's own learning; the conversations one has concerning one's own and other participants' learning; and the relationship one has with any academic (public domain) material engaged with in the process of learning.

* collaborative assessment - a critical perspective is also necessary in the process of assessment, and in keeping with the purpose of CSCL, assessment should involve the learner, her peers and a tutor. I call this triangulated assessment (McConnell, 1994). The need for, and importance of, collaborative assessment is clearly articulated by many learning practitioners. It is not possible to present all the arguments here (see McConnell, 1994 for details). Suffice to say that both research and practice in this area indicate that there are important educational benefits to learners being involved in their own and others' assessment of course work.
For those who doubt the ability of students to participate in self and peer assessment, a recent survey looking at self-assessment studies showed that there was considerable consistency between marks assigned by tutors and students in peer and self-assessment situations (Falchikov and Boud, 1989), so dispelling some of the criticism that students are not able to effectively assess themselves and each other.

* a community of learners - learners are responsible for managing their own learning and for helping others in theirs. This learning community works through learners and tutors collectively managing their learning needs through negotiation and discussion.

* just in time knowledge - knowledge in CSCL environments comes from several sources, such as knowledge from other learners in the process of discussion; knowledge from cooperative learning projects; knowledge from online sources and resources; knowledge from academic papers and books. However, the concept of just in time knowledge is central to CSCL. In a recent research project which I have been involved in concerning Just in Time Open Learning (Saunders et al, 1994) at least two processes underpinning the development of just in time knowledge have been suggested:

Communication : The focus here is on exchanges and collaborative learning. The objective is to allow knowledge building through social interaction. CSCL puts learners in contact with each other. The constitution of a learning group is central, and requires a common project to work on. The focus, however, is still on personal learning.

Knowledge Building : The focus here is on collective knowledge building from exchanges between learners about their practices. It builds on Communication but requires some specific conditions :
- a shift from 'trivial' conversation to an organised debate that has much to do with a structured collective research approach.
- other's expertise should be acknowledged without requiring external validation.
- the debates should not be concerned with taken for granted patterns of interpretation but should focus on the transformation of behaviours, habits or routines. This requires time and is rarely compatible with day to day (on-the-job) practice.
- the debate requires an incentive in terms of intellectual commitment. Participation in a collaborative task helps maintain efforts to keep up the level of exchanges in the debate. This task could be an exercise such as writing a joint paper, setting up a professional knowledge resource base or realising a collective research project. (Saunders et al, 1994).

* collective responsibility by learners and tutors alike for attending to the processes of the community i.e. reviewing and modifying the design, procedures and ways of working.

Fact or fantasy ?

This new paradigm for distance learning is indeed fact and not fantasy. For the past ten years or so, I have been designing learning events which use new information technologies, and in the last five years have been involved in running a distance learning Masters course where the participants meet in virtual reality.
This is made possible by learners and tutors using personal computers linked to modems (devices for sending data along telephone lines) to communicate with each other. They log into a host computer where their communications are stored, and where they pick up other learners' and tutors' communications. The communication is asynchronous i.e. it is delayed. CSCL allows for a variety of types of communication. The main forms are :

Electronic Mail which supports communication between individuals.
Bulletin Boards (bboards) for group communications.
Computer Conferencing (CC) which allow for communal interactive group communications (see McConnell, 1994, for more details).

Some characteristics of CSCL

Computer supported cooperative learning and training is clearly different to learning and training events held face-to-face. Some of the more significant differences are :

* people from geographically distant sites are able to 'meet' without physically travelling to one location
*CSCL reduces the isolation of learners and tutors; in fact, it seems that CSCL can actually increase the communications between learners and tutors on a programme
* there are savings on time and travel (and therefore financial savings, although there will be initial capital set-up costs, and recurring costs)
* meetings are continuous in nature - a CSCL meeting can take place over a defined time span (e.g. a week or a month), or can continue indefinitely (for months or years)
* interactions (responses to contributions etc.) are not instantaneous or immediate
* people can contribute to the groups' work whenever they feel they want to i.e. without waiting their turn or interrupting others
* contributions can be made at any time of the day or night, seven days a week
* a user can contribute from any geographic position e.g. people who have to travel in their work can link in from almost any location
* communication usually (but not necessarily) happens in a slower, more sporadic fashion
* there is a permanent record of the groups' work and of everyone's contribution to it (this can be manipulated like a data base)
* participants can access electronic resources and data bases other than those used for the particular programme
* social presence, process and product of CSCL meetings often differ from face-to-face meetings
* the opportunity to work cooperatively in groups is enhanced - CSCL technologies can support co-operative learning and group processes in ways that may be difficult to achieve in face-to-face meetings.

There are of course potential problems which have to be considered in implementing CSCL. Learners and tutors require access to the technology

- this has implications for equal opportunities, although many people, certainly in professional continuing education, have computers available to them. The growth in the use of computers generally at home and work, and the development of online resources via the Internet, are bound to facilitate the trend towards wider use of computers. But clearly, for many people, access is an important issue. Additionally, communications are text-based, though this may prove to be an advantage for many (McConnell, 1994). But CSCL allows us to do new things in new ways. The challenge is to design courses and learning events which will exploit this new medium, not from a technologically determined perspective, but from one which starts with an exploration of our values as adult continuing educators.

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Autobiography in an academic context

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Sue Humphreys, Hastings College
Jo Hargreaves, The National Childbirth Trust

Jo: What are we going to do?

M: We are going to present a paper as a round table discussion of our lived experience of doing autobiography in an academic context.

Jo: What d'you mean Margaret?

M: Well we need to say why we decided to do the Postgraduate Diploma in Adult Learning and Life History in the first place, after all Harré and Gillett say
"...if we wish to discern the meaning of a particular behaviour ..... we would need to know which rules the individual was following at that point. Thus we would need to know where and how the individual locates his or her present behaviour in relation to the context that obtains then and there" (Harre and Gillett, 1994:20).

Jo: You mean how come we're sitting in front of this computer, writing this conference paper.

M: Yes and hopefully by the end of this paper everyone at the conference will know why.

Jo: OK so why did you come on this course?

M: I've decided to do a PhD using life history method. It is my educational life history which has brought me to this point. I bring it all with me to doing the research, and participate in it...

Jo: And interact with it?

M: Yes, so in true academic fashion, I need to know about it before I can do it. So, what of autobiography and reflexivity in the research process? That's how I got here, what about you?

Jo: It was part of the process of being. I think it was an accident, or possibly meant to be! Sue H, said " You'd like this course " and I thought I might. I meditated the night before the course started and this is what I wrote in the Journal:

...... I watched my breath for a while and got a strong sensation of expectancy, full of hope, private and delicious. I felt like a ripe fruit, a smooth juicy, yellow pear, ready. I felt like the person about to taste and bite and relish the pear. Both the desired object and the desirer. Being and being done to. Ready and ripe, and here I am.

M: Meditation and metaphors - straight out of Progoff's Intensive Journal Process (Lukinsky, 1990) and this is before you started the course! I read that paper and remember thinking and writing in my journal ..' you won't catch me doing that'.... Well I have to admit when I did get into writing about myself, I discovered the power of metaphor as a way of seeing. How about you Sue H, what metaphor have you got to explain why you came on the course?

Sue H: A stepping stone, I wanted to do a DPhil, but I hadn't enough time. I wanted to keep my hand in at writing and the whole area interested me. I've always been more comfortable with the process approach and it was a chance to explore the reasons for people coming into academia later in life, at a time when my life needed sorting out, with a new group of people!

Sue S: What strikes me is our very differing motivations for doing the course, for example, I came on to the course in order to learn more about life history as a research method, and also to develop my knowledge around issues of adult learning. Having said that I think that it is very exciting for us to explore our commonalities and differences of autobiography in an academic context.

Sue H: A major discovery for me, was the notion of multiselves that Norquay (1990) talks about. I had often felt a Jekyll and Hyde character, confident in some circles ,able to write and give presentations, particularly in the voluntary sector, and unconfident, inarticulate person in the statutory sector. The concept of mutiselves helped legitimise the contradictions in aspects of my story which has had a positive outcome. I feel it has opened up a new way of viewing and reviewing experience.

Jo: I noticed, Margaret, that our autobiographies were at the extremes on the personal to public continuum of disclosure; we seem to have an opposite perspective, in terms of our trust of our "selves" with the audience.

M: I think its about where we are located in terms of knowledge creation and how we perceive the academic context. You feel your own subjectivity is a valid way of knowing and resist the academic context of the course, while for me knowing comes from others and is validated by others thus in my writing the academic context is primary despite the course being about autobiography and the primacy of self as a valid way of knowing.

Jo: As you know, in my writing, I explored the oppression in my childhood and this has possibly led me to resist oppression in other contexts including the academic.

M : For me the academic context provides an enabling framework although I found a tension in writing for two audiences - the academic and myself. A reinterpretation and reconstruction of my personal self took place during the development of my narrative. This allowed me to write academically about autobiographical writing and you're right, my subjective knowledge was not for disclosure to the public academic audience.

Jo: I like the concept of my selves being like clothes waiting in a wardrobe ready to be worn. So I suppose looked at in that light, my story was representative of the trusting self outfit.

M: Davis (1992) talks about positioning oneself within a particular discourse or storyline, and an external influence on my position of disclosure within my autobiographical discourse is the audience. On writing my autobiography within an academic context, for me the personal remains private, that is not disclosed to this audience. However I am willing to disclose my observations on going through the process, that is I retained my mortar board and placed my experience of autobiographical writing within the literature on reflexivity (Steier, 1991).

Jo: I thought your story was about process; implicit was the pain , that of necessity accompanies learning, when feelings are involved. I remember coming across Marion Taylor's model of disequilibrium in learning. I felt incredibly reassured. The pain I had experienced was recognised in that academic paper. I don't think I needed academic validity to experience pain, but the fact that someone else had described it gave me a sense of belonging.

M: So feeling becomes a valid way of knowing, that is learning arises out of feelings and a sense of self, as well as from reading others. Autobiography within an academic context brings the subjective and objective together. I construct myself in writing about myself, but while I am doing this I am also aware, that that is what I am doing, within the context of a particular audience and purpose. I can be my own audience and write for my own purposes.........

Sue S: This course has changed the way that I view academic writing. I have had to unlearn some of my deeply rooted notions of what I have considered academic writing to be. I have learnt that it is legitimate to integrate personal experience and to use 'I'. What I have also found interesting is that some of the things I was feeling about autobiographical writing are also explored in the literature. For example, I couldn't escape the feeling that the process was self indulgent. To discover that this issue has been addressed by, for example, Ribbens (1991) and Williams (1993) has given me greater confidence in my endeavours.

Sue H: I have never had that problem in my writing. My problem has been with the value of the written word. I have experienced times when my writing on my community education experience has not been valued by academics, I now believe this to be to do with the value of the written word, and whose knowledge is it that is valued? Also with the language that is used, does abstract knowledge have a higher value than everyday language?

Sue S: Whose knowledge is valued? That has been a poignant issue for me. Before I came on the course I believed that if my writing was to have any legitimacy, if my ideas were to be taken seriously, then they must be corroborated by others...a bit like Margaret. This resulted in my need to cite references after an argument I had constructed and link with issues from my learning life history about what I conceptualised valid knowledge to be.

Sue H: That's fascinating, I now realise that I use quotes to provide the language that I do not feel I have. I have the ideas and can make the connections, but lack confidence in my own use of language and its everydayness. I made a major discovery when writing my autobiographical essay, about writing. Bruner (1979) talks about the writing controlling the person, allowing for a 'freedom to be dominated', this happened with me, when I was feeling confident, and had high self-esteem I could write and it flowed, at other times, I would struggle with how academic it should be and could only focus on structure. It appears that both are necessary for an academic piece of autobiographical writing. Exploring aspects such as this have given me an understanding of how I write and increased my self confidence and its OK to write in fits and starts. The disjuncture between verbal and written self had been giving me problems.

Sue S: Disjuncture, that word is really poignant for me. I read something on the very first day of the course which had such resonance with my own experience. It was a comment by a mature student cited in an article by

Miller (1993) who talked about the disjuncture between
...her sense of herself as academically successful and that part of her which... harbours the conviction that one day she will be discovered as an impostor in the academic world' (Miller, 1993:76).

Sue H: The process of writing this script together has definitely been an opportunity for transformative learning (Dominicé, 1990). Margaret you commented that you had finished with your autobiographical assignment and after discussing it with us, it was like it was just beginning. Freeman (1993) in 'Rewriting the self ' talks about the process as never ending. By exploring the process together we have opened up new interpretations, questions, it appears ' like an aerial view'. we see things differently each time we look at our own and each others life stories.

Jo: Our stories interface with others, other stories we might choose to tell, other stories others tell about us, and other's stories. These can only exist if we have an audience - either self or others.

M: The audience is vital to the construction or act of creation of our story, but it also impinges upon what we choose to reveal, and creating tensions when faced with multiple audiences. The audience is there both in the beginning and the end. Just like the audience of this conference paper.

Jo: Which is why we are sitting in front of this computer.

M: Yes, the conference paper is the vehicle we're using to share our collective celebration of the power of writing in adult learning.

Jo: 'We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time'

(T. S. Eliot 'Little Gidding ')

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Exchanging places, trading learning: the impact of cross-cultural visiting on personal and professional development

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Introduction

Our aim in this paper is to review and evaluate an item of shared experience which occurred in the context of an aspect of SCUTREA's recent history. We report on a study which we carried out to investigate the learning which resulted from the transatlantic exchange programme of university-based adult educators organised by SCUTREA in the mid-1980s. We examine the impact of this experience on the personal and professional development of the participants, and the effects of the exchange on the academic networks to which the participants belong.

This exchange programme was initiated in 1984. Over the course of the following two years, two groups of professors from the United States and Canada visited the UK to attend SCUTREA conferences and to meet colleagues in university departments of adult education, and two groups of British academics visited the USA and/or Canada. These visits were funded by the Kellogg Foundation, which also provided support for a number of participants in the Transatlantic Dialogue conference and Research Exchange which took place in Leeds in 1988, and which had its roots in the original exchange. It was intended that participants should generally be academics at relatively early stages in their careers. Most participants were in their thirties at the time of their visits.

Our own relationship was strengthened as a result of our participation in the exchange programme, and over the years we have talked a good deal about the events and people involved. In attempting to make sense of our experience and that of the other participants, and to draw out institutional meanings for SCUTREA as an organisation, we are following through some earlier research concerns. Nod has been interested in issues in sociological autobiography for some time, and in the operation of 'invisible colleges' - social and professional networks - and the way in which these have an impact on the development of disciplines and fields of interest as well as on individuals' identities and personal and career development (see Miller, 1993; 1994). Miriam has explored patterns in the construction and maintenance of friendship, the discourses of friendship as 'family' and the ways in which friendships become the repository for the 'history' of an individual. (see Zukas, 1993).

Our approach is in keeping with C. Wright Mills's concept of the social scientific enterprise as enabling us 'to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society' (Mills, 1970: 12). From a post-modern perspective, our approach also enables us to consider how such experiences expand available discourses for the construction and reconstruction of national, professional and personal identity.

Methods used in the study

The research was planned in two phases, and this report presents some of the findings from the first phase. In order to re-establish contact with as many members of the exchange as possible, we distributed a questionnaire to those individuals involved in the exchange as participants and as organisers. There were 12 exchange participants from the UK and nine from North America - 21 in all, plus five organisers. One participant from Canada died soon after the exchange and four have moved out of the field of adult education. Our report is based on responses from ten participants and two organisers. We asked about individuals' significant learning points, the impact of the experience on their personal and professional development, and the effects of the exchange on national and international networks; and we also asked for the predominant image, metaphor, picture or story that summed up the experience for individuals. We also asked the organisers about the aims and origins of the exchange.

In the second phase, we intend to follow up the questionnaire with semi-structured interviews conducted either face to face or through e-mail, and we have piloted this on one participant whose responses are reported here. This approach originates in sociological autobiography and enables participants, including the authors, to reflect systematically on their own exchange experiences and those of others.

Purposes of the exchange

For those setting up the exchange, the main aim was to explore adult education issues and research in different countries in order to develop comparative perspectives. The arguments for an exchange between two groups with different intellectual and cultural traditions seemed obvious - as A, an organiser, said, it would offer participants the opportunity for "mutual learning, research ideas, at a time when the 'common language' (i.e. English) was still the most important determinant of comparative, international contact". Another organiser (E) had more subversive educational intentions: "It was an attempt to engineer a situation where participants, many of whom were not from a social science background, could begin to see adult education philosophy, policy and provision as a product of a particular cultural context". But the principal purpose was an educational sightseeing mission in order to understand better one's own "assumptions and thinking about adult education" (E).

While the short-term understandings emerging from the exchange were, inevitably, anthropological with many insights about the ways in which different cultures operate, the longer-term outcomes were much more varied and complex than those organising might have expected.

For all who responded, it was a worthwhile experience (D: "it undoubtedly changed my life") which at the very least gave them the chance to consider other research paradigms and adult education practices in order to gain a different perspective on their work at home. It could be argued that individuals acquired new discourses to use in relation to their own practices, although these involved usages which seemed alien and inappropriate at first. A reminder of how strange such discourses seemed is a piece in the first BANANAE (British and North American Network for Adult Education) newsletter which notes North American educational terms such as the pay-off (in learning); investment (in learning); capture the funds; zero-based budgeting and sweat equity (Zukas, 1986). At this superficial level, 'foreign' language proved to be an enormous initial source of confusion, later forgotten by participants, perhaps because the then unfamiliar economic metaphors of North America are now part of the everyday language of education in Britain.

Many individuals developed their professional networks as a result of the exchange. Some found opportunities to enhance their professional status. For a few, the exchange had an impact on their sense of identity, sometimes highlighting a sense of belonging and sometimes creating a sense of difference and dislocation. Several reported changes in political consciousness, globally or professionally, or an increased awareness of power issues such as gender and class. L described the experience as "confirming my belief that British adult education was more self-consciously political and ideological than that in the USA". L added that the questions asked during presentations showed how "American academics were more interested in methodology, British academics in ideology".

Culture shock and new perspectives

One of the predictable outcomes was the sense of culture shock that many individuals experienced, particularly in the first round of exchanges. C felt that it was "like being in an academic satire like Small Worlds" (Lodge, 1984) while others were confused by social rules, food, plumbing and dress codes. B remarked that one of her most vivid memories was of hearing a British colleague's hairstyle referred to as "akin to an explosion in a mattress factory", highlighting the relative informality of British participants. However, these initial observations were not the most important elements of the learning which took place during and after the exchange.

The discovery of different cultural traditions within adult education also contributed to the sense of culture shock and the development of new perspectives. H felt that the exchange provided the "opportunity to gain a wider perspective on adult education via the exchange of a greater range of viewpoints and arguments [and] to see adult education in practice in a different national context". F felt that his experience in the USA had "contributed to my understanding of the need for a more formal and professional approach", contrasting the North American model with the 'dedicated amateur' style characteristic of British adult education in the early 1980s.

Establishing working relationships

For many of those working in Britain, the exchange resulted in close working relationships with British colleagues and with those abroad. For some, this involved a more intense involvement in SCUTREA: "I would say that the experience of the exchange brought me into a closer working relationship with some others who were part of the exchange scheme and subsequently into commitment to SCUTREA even beyond leaving university adult education" (F). For others, it resulted in the development of close friendships: "I feel much warmer towards individuals who were on the exchange programme than I might otherwise have done. Some have become friends who know more about my life than most of my colleagues at work" (C).

Exceptionally, one participant and one organiser felt that the exchange had few consequences (J: "I know other adult educators better because of sharing the experience with them, but this has not materialised in any tangible outcome"; A: "For me, it was just an episode"). Others believed that the network of contacts resulting from the exchange had been beneficial for their professional identities. G said that "being made to feel part of a much wider network" was the most significant part of the experience while B (from Britain) said that "working with my British colleagues" had had the most impact on her personal development.

Many individuals became committed both to the network and to individuals within the network. D reported that one of her most significant experiences was "meeting a number of US colleagues with whom I've stayed in touch. I have become close to some of my British colleagues as a result of our shared experience. I have developed much greater confidence in my dealings with colleagues".

In general, our female respondents tended to emphasise the affective or 'warm feelings' aspects of their involvement in the exchange, while the men had more to say about the impact of the exchange on their career development.

Intellectual development

One of the themes emerging from the exchange that linked with at least one organiser's hidden agenda was the insight achieved by many individuals into their own intellectual assumptions as a result of the contacts made. Many individuals felt that they had reached different understandings about their own intellectual traditions as a result of their introduction to new discourses of adult education theory and practice. Sometimes, these realisations were self-confirming; one participant described "listening to the grandfathers of the adult education movement in America, and deciding that there was more depth of thought coming from the young British university adult educators" (B). Others were made uncomfortable by their own previously unquestioned intellectual inheritance: "It certainly enabled me to grasp the dimensions of the critique of British adult education and its traditions much more clearly, and has enabled me to work critically within it, without the romanticism which I was given as part of my induction into university adult education" (J). At least two individuals (J and K) used the ideas emerging from the experience to produce books, demonstrating both their intellectual development and the new professional opportunities generated by the exchange; J describes "the realisation of two culturally different views about the importance of epistemology in UK/US adult education. They both claim an epistemology but mean completely different things. This realisation led to the publication of a book which I edited".

In K's case, the experience led to a re-examination of class and power, which later influenced his writing: "In terms of learning, being in Britain where the class system is so clear and out in the open made me aware of my own class position ... I've thought about this a lot since in terms of the book I co-wrote. It also affected my understanding of my family and my experience at high school."

Confirming identities, changing identities

K's discovery of a different discourse to describe his class position marked a different way of viewing himself within his own culture. As we have already noted, other respondents remarked on their enhanced sense of common identity with their compatriots. An exception to this pattern is exemplified in the case of L, who, although British, was living and working in the US at the time of the exchange, and was hence a 'North American' for its purposes. He remarked on how "normally in the American context I'm English, so it was strange to be treated as a stranger to my own culture. I felt confirmed in my decision to live and work in the

States. I also felt uniquely privileged to be able to bridge the two academic cultures - and still do. I realised that for me straddling the Atlantic is crucial."

Conclusions

Our initial results demonstrate some of the learning which resulted from the transatlantic exchange, particularly in relation to personal and professional development and impact on academic networks. We hope to explore these issues further in the second phase of research.

But the exchange also had several unexpected effects on the culture of SCUTREA as an organisation - perhaps, as the conference theme indicates, a cause for celebration. Firstly, the development of a tighter 'invisible college' within the organisation provided a bedrock of personal commitment and professional energy for SCUTREA during a period of rapid change for adult education. Secondly, the experience of participating in adult education conferences with very different traditions and formats speeded up the process of change in conference structure that SCUTREA had already been undergoing. The organisational requirements of the Transatlantic Dialogue and Research Exchange (perhaps the culmination of the Exchange) brought about a marked increase in the openness of paper selection and the accountability for choice. Thirdly, the links with sister organisations and individual colleagues abroad created a greater desire through the exchange participants and within SCUTREA for international interchange. We hope to be able to explore further how best to capitalise on the longer-term outcomes of this exchange for any future exchanges.

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Fiftysomething

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Introduction

In this paper we are concerned with the education of people of fiftysomething. What do we know generally about the educational background of people of this age?

Roughly 2/3 of them left school at 15 or earlier and have never obtained any formal qualification. These older people are of course well known as a group which has a very low involvement in adult education. (ACACE, 1982a).

Nevertheless over the last decade there has been a slow increase in their participation in adult education.

Typically students of 50 plus are not representative of the general population of that age group. Members of social classes A & B are twice as likely to participate in education as are members of classes D & E. Also more women participate than men (Schuler & Bostyn,1992).

Other than occasional courses at pre-retirement and a few on bereavement (*Adult Education*, 1978), there has been very little adult education intervention in the lives of the increasing number of people who in their fifties face major life changes through, for example, redundancy, early retirement, the ending of their childcare responsibilities, or end of marriages due to breakdown or bereavement. Given better levels of health and changed expectations of ageing this group can look forward to at least two decades of active life and may need new ways of reorientation themselves and fulfilling their lives.

Clearly an access/new opportunities course would appear to be called for. Recent years have seen a proliferation of such courses intended to introduce/reintroduce people to study. Most however have been specifically aimed at students in their thirties and forties with a possibility of retraining to enter the workplace.

Concerning people of 50 plus, one of the perennial questions is, should people of this age range be encouraged to attend general access courses or should there be access courses specifically for them? (Withnall & Kaburasa, 1989).

With courses specifically for older people we need to rethink the aims of courses.

If we consider adult education generally there are many aims ascribed to our work, or to put the other side of the coin, there are many motives why people attend adult education classes.

In a classic study of this, (ACACE, 1982 b) common motives that were noted were:

the wish to develop job skills, either to get a job or to improve prospects in one's present work, to develop practical skills useful in daily life, social reasons; classes were seen as opportunity to meet other people, or, the other side of the coin, to get out of the house, and interest in the subject and/or for personal challenge or stimulation.

These were general motives of people across all ages. If we study people of different ages we find motives change, as we would expect from common sense.

Young adults are typically motivated by work and by setting up a home.

Later on with at least some of these basic needs catered for people increasingly turn to courses which provide opportunity for self development and to learn of new areas of life (Woolfe et al, 1987).

For older students obviously the vocational aims of many access courses are inappropriate.

However it is noticeable that even more age specific courses, e.g. for retirement or bereavement, often focus heavily upon instrumental aims: providing information about health, or finance or social services for the elderly etc. (Tidmarsh, 1975).

These aims while important do not provide an adequate cover of the needs of the group.

Shortly after our first SCUTREA conference the Russell report (DES, 1973), speaking of this age group, noted that one of the tasks of adult education is to promote the positive use of leisure time.

The fiftysomething course

"Fiftysomething" is a course which seeks to address this range of needs and has now taken place for several years. In the day long course which runs for twenty-four weeks students are introduced to the study of three disciplines: Literature, Psychology and Art history, in addition to having an hour long new opportunities session.

Although students have age in common they come from varying social, educational and working backgrounds. In a typical year this included retired school teachers, a dentist, several who had left school at 15, women who had spent their working life at home caring for children and then elderly relatives, and a woman who in adulthood discovered she is dyslexic. Like all mixed ability/experience groups this produced the problem of selecting texts which would be both accessible to the less experienced and equally interesting and challenging to those with academic backgrounds.

The classes are conducted as tutorials (with no more than 14 students) where the students are encouraged to participate fully in discussion. The emphasis on participation helps the students become more self-confident. They are introduced to, and learn to work with the methodologies appropriate to each discipline.

The literature selected for study, for example last session, began with poems and short stories which could be relatively quickly read by everyone in the group and discussed at the next class. Students were encouraged to consider the form and content of each text and relate these to one another. Once confidence in reading "literature" and discussing it in a group had been acquired two longer novels were studied, Jane Eyre and the French Lieutenant's Woman. Although the latter was considered difficult and challenging by students they found it very rewarding. Particularly so as they were able to compare it, in two class sessions, with the film based on the novel. This provided additional ways of analysing narrative material. Through learning to read texts closely and analytically students all felt they had come to engage more critically with all texts that they read or viewed, whether it was a newspaper or a television soap opera.

Texts were linked in an important way. Those selected to work with were chosen from different historic periods and are ones which raise questions of gender, work and concepts of ageing. Through these students addressed the ways in which the received wisdom of each age is socially constructed.

All students are usually less familiar with the discipline of art history. The objectives of the course are that students should become familiar with the history of European painting; have an understanding of the ways in which they can critically analyse and discuss painting; and have an understanding of the wider cultural and historical context in which paintings are produced. Two of the classes are held in Leeds City Art Gallery where students are able to look at and discuss "real" paintings rather than slides. These are usually very successful and productive sessions, particularly for those who have never set foot in an Art Gallery before.

The psychology sessions aim to introduce the study of our behaviour and experiences of life. Two of the main dimensions of this subcourse are the individual in the social group and the development of the individual from childhood to old age, with most emphasis being given to the second half of life, along with the "normal" problems people encounter then. In addition individuals are helped to develop increasing self awareness by a variety of procedures and to consider possibilities of personal development.

This last topic is taken further in the New Opportunities sessions which had the usual structure of such sessions.

When possible subjects are taught in an interdisciplinary way. This serves a two-fold purpose. Firstly it is important that students should understand that the academic rigour of one discipline can be transferred to another. Secondly it helps students understand that all cultural production is set firmly in a particular time and society.

Although the syllabus details the major areas studied, the structure of the course makes possible negotiation between students and tutors about content, timing and ways in which classes are conducted. This autonomy, although limited, increases students' self-confidence.

Research into related groups

At this point it will be useful to turn aside briefly from consideration of this specific course and to note some results a couple of our Ph D students have found while researching the experiences of students of this age group, though we should state, not this specific group.

Firstly in a study of groups of mature students Barbara Hull (1994), using Battle's self-esteem questionnaire (1981), found that all the groups exhibited on average a significant improvement in self-esteem. However the major increase was found in a pre-retirement group. Further most interestingly it was found that the largest increase was with men who had not previously participated in adult education.

In another project Ellen Leger (1992) has been looking at, among others, the first type of course noted earlier, where students in their 50s are in courses with other younger, but nevertheless mature students. She has been actually looking at another side of the situation, i.e. the students experience of stress. She noted particularly the significance of change. A lot of student were experiencing externally imposed change; through bereavement, loss of job etc. On the other hand many reported that the course produced a change in themselves. Thus she similarly found there was very often a general improvement in self esteem.

Concluding comments

On the "Fiftysomething" course generally student responses have been extremely positive. The social group developments often seen on access courses have occurred. There has been a very low drop-out rate. Most students have left the course enthusiastic to go on to more Continuing Education which we know in fact that several have taken up. Changes in self-esteem, similar to those noted above, have occurred and several students have experienced considerable personal development.

This brings us back to the earlier introductory comments about the wide range of aims and objectives in adult education.

To note yet another (cf. Wilson, 1972), for a few students, (and we would not wish to overemphasise the number), their recent experiences had involved so much traumatic change that their outlook on life had dropped to a very low level. Education, we have found, has provided them opportunity to re-orient themselves and has led to an improvement in their mental well-being.

More generally for our students, benefits of the course have been in the area of personal development, rather than instrumental gains, e.g. vocational progress.

The wider positive social consequences and improvements in life quality resulting from courses such as the above for this age group need to be recognised and discussed.

It is particularly important at this time when the focus of government policy is almost exclusively on vocational courses that these benefits of these courses for this age group are acknowledged and supported.

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Happiness is a thing called subversion

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In this age of budget cuts, business units, internal markets, performance indicators, the drive for quality and performance related pay, there will always be issues of values, process and outcomes that have to be resolved. In the course of their duties, teachers, lecturers and trainers have to confront issues that go against their value, increasingly so in the current political climate. In some cases these issues are not confronted because the need to survive may be seen to be more important. However, when the issues of values are confronted then strategies have to be drawn up not only to challenge the status quo to gain concessions but also to survive.

The change in public services has forced organisations to look at the delivery of their services differently and the reduction in budgets has led to substantial cuts in staffing. While in local government there stills remains an element of democracy as councillors are elected to run councils, there is limited or non existent democracy in further and higher education as the governing bodies do not legally have to have community members on the board. However, in both local government and in further and higher education there has been one common theme; management have become more confident in introducing change, sometimes gradually and at other times forcefully within a short time span. The change has resulted in training for new methods of service delivery; training has not always been a priority for local government in a strategic sense and access to this has usually been confined to senior officers or where the training is relevant to a change in legislation in specific areas, e.g. Social Services. The change in the financial and political climate has resulted in the managerial class ensuring their existence above all else. This has meant that in some local councils, large amounts of the training budgets have been spent on training managers and less so on those staff below management levels. Training and access to training in order to deliver the services as required by changed conditions has always been an issue for many staff within local government and this is further compounded by race, gender, disability and status of the workers concerned. It is this issue that I hope to examine as a situation where access to training is denied because of race, gender and status (in this context part time workers), strategies have to be drawn up in order to get training and to ensure that any conditions laid down by management are to be overcome in order to ensure continuos funding of more training.

I was involved in training some staff for a local council which for a long while had ignored the training and development of these staff. The staff were all black Youth and Community Workers and the majority were female, most of whom were employed on a part time basis. The Sessions were a one off series of training run on three separate evenings and they were approved by the management after Trade Union pressure for a period of over a year. The initial reasons given by management against funding for such training were that there was no additional funding, the part time workers had all received training when they initially began work and that as Youth and Community Work was not a Statutory requirement training was not seen to be a priority currently for these group of workers but would be planned in the new financial year.

At the second evening training Session, one of the objectives was to identify opportunities for access to more training. This led to considerable problems for me as I was using the Council's policies on training and equal opportunities to explain the access to training that was available to them. This resulted in cynical statements from the participants and a feeling that they had heard all this before. The reality to them was that there was no access for Youth and Community Workers to training whether part-time or full-time, and where training was offered in the past it was highly specialised, i.e. concerned only with aspects Youth Work with no training needs analysis conducted prior to the training. There was no recognition by the department that the Workers wished to progress to higher positions within the organisation or branch out of Youth Work into management or supervisory roles elsewhere within the Council. Furthermore, the training courses were organised by the Personnel Office with no consultation with the participants. The participants felt that their careers as workers within the Council were not taken seriously and as quoted by one Youth and Community Worker, "if anything there were being controlled by the discriminative practices of the Council".

What they felt they needed was to be in a position to control their own careers and this meant attending training courses which they considered relevant to their development rather than those arranged on their behalf by the organisation. The Council arranged training courses for its staff which in theory could be attended by all staff. These courses were organised by Central Personnel in collaboration with Personnel Officers from each of the departments. However, to attend these courses required the permission of the line managers and also required the department to pay Central Personnel for each staff attending. Any staff hoping to attend has to approach their line manager so that could release the necessary funds for the training. In most cases this depended on the amount of money available within the department for training and the line manager's acceptance of whether the training was relevant to the individual and also the section or the department. In many cases staff may have booked the course with the line manager's permission, but the training course may be cancelled near the date due to a lack of a minimum number of participants.

To some of the participants even where they had identified a relevant training course which they felt would develop their careers, they had been turned down by their line managers either because the line managers had little or no funds for training or they "refused to see the relevance of these courses to the staff and the department", as quoted by the one of the participants. The Workers saw this as the organisation controlling their careers by denying access to training and this contradicted with the Council's equal opportunities and training policies.

After discussions we came to a decision that at the next and final evening training Session, one of the objectives would be to re-examine the Council's equal opportunities and training policies to identify what steps could be taken collectively to ensure access to the relevant training in the future. At the final Training Session, a re-examination of the organisation's policies clearly revealed that it was committed to training for all staff and positive action for women, ethnic minority staff and those with disabilities. The equal opportunities policy also allowed black workers to organise themselves into networks to discuss issues and problems, and time off was allowed for this activities in some cases. In addition where it was felt necessary the Council would allocate funds for trainers and consultants to be employed to support and develop such networks. The outcome of this training Session was that the participants would organise themselves into a Black Workers Group (BWG) within the department and approach the Council for funding to help meet their aims and objectives. The reasons to be used for setting up BWG were that; one, that the Council's policies allowed such Groups to exist and support would be provided and two, that although it was committed to working towards becoming an Investor In People organisation, the latter did not correspond to equal opportunities, and so setting up such a Group would enhance this Initiative. Equal Opportunities is not clearly stated as a requirement for Investor In People and this is one of its weaknesses.

The aim of the BWG was "to take control of their career development and to gain access to relevant training". The objectives were to firstly to obtain funding for the BWG for training courses, secondly to identify individual training needs and the relevant training courses and thirdly to attend training courses based on these needs.

The BWG's approach to the Council for funding raised problems, as firstly the management were reluctant to provide time off for the BWG to meet for networking, secondly they were not entirely convinced that members of the BWG were denied access to relevant training and thirdly they could not see where they could find funds for BWG.

After three meetings with the Assistant Director of the Department, it was agreed that the BWG would be allocated two and a half thousand pounds for training, however, certain conditions were attached. The conditions were that the funds provided would be for training only, i.e. payment for trainers or consultants and had to spent by the end of the financial year (which would come to an end within five weeks), the Council would not provide any training venue or refreshments for the training sessions, secondly no time off would be given during work time for meetings for members of the BWG or for attending training workshops and finally that any training conducted would be evaluated by the department's Training Officer, this meant that they would be present all the training workshops.

Given these conditions, which the Group saw as restrictions, they had to had to organise training either in the evening, which would mean that those part-time Youth and Community Workers who worked in the evening would lose their pay if they attended any training workshops, or on weekends. Secondly, because the funding was restricted to payment for trainers' costs the Group would have to find a training venue and refreshments for the training workshops for free. Thirdly, the presence of the Department's Training Officer at all the training workshops in order to evaluate training meant that this would inhibit some of the participants from expressing their opinions of the Council and individual line managers for the fear of being reported back to the management.

Here, those yielding organisational power were practising policies in a way to restrict the career development of certain staff. The main weapon of control was access to resources; management had the power to release resources which could benefit staff as the latter saw fit; however, the conditions imposed meant that a strategy for subversion had to be drawn up in order to overcome these barriers and to enhance the learning and development of workers, i.e. adult learners.

I was approached by the Group to attend a meeting to facilitate a Workshop to identify ways in which the funds allocated could be used to meet the objectives given the restrictions imposed by the Council. The conditions imposed by the management were not to everyone's liking in the BWG. For some members, the Group had compromised with the management, while for others the main issue was to use the funds to their advantage. In order to overcome the issue of not getting time off work some full time workers suggested that they could take a day off from their annual leave to attend a training workshop during the day, but this was a problem for part-time workers most of whom refused to accept this as a solution. The majority of the part-time Youth and Community workers were employed on a contract basis , and most had other full-time jobs, they did not see why they had to sacrifice their holidays in order to attend training workshops; training was an important component of the work and it should be provided during work time by the organisation.

In addition there was very little time left for the BWG to arrange and deliver the training. I suggested that we should brainstorm all ideas that participants had and then I would then put forward recommendations. The final outcome was that my recommendations were accepted with some changes made after discussions and consultations with Group members, and the training was delivered on two weekend workshops on dates acceptable to the majority of the participants at a convenient venue with well resourced training facilities, including a crèche and refreshments.

The method used for this subversion was for me to charge the Council two and a half thousand pounds for training members of the BWG. The BWG identified a community group who provided the venue with a crèche and refreshments in return for allowing two of their staff to attend the training workshops; I would pay some of the money back to the community group to pay for the crèche, hire of the training rooms and for providing refreshments This money would then be used to pay me to conduct more training workshops in the new financial year. The dates were arranged to ensure that the department's Training Officer who was responsible for evaluating the training workshop would have difficulty in attending these Workshops, as they had planned to go on holiday at the time.

While it appears that this method was successful in providing the participants with the type of courses they felt relevant, there were still compromises to be made. Training should be an integral part of any job; learning should be supported by the employing organisation and should not be a burden on learners or put them in position to fight for the right to be trained and developed. The arrangement of the workshops at weekends meant that participants had to give up their personal time, some of the participants could only attend the workshops for half a day due to other commitments. The restriction of spending all the funds by the end of the financial year also imposed some problems given that the Training Officer requested a copy of the Training programmes for all the Workshops, for this reason two had to be arranged before the end of the financial year. If this was not done the BWG would have lost the funding.

However, in planning any subversion of this sort where management act as barriers one useful support is the community. Many community groups have been practising "subversion" as some sources of their funding have gradually dried up. The expertise that resides within these groups can be very useful as in this case it was their suggestion to do a deal whereby both the BWG and the community group benefited. In planning subversion one of the difficulties is to try and ensure that all involved benefit; in the case here there were differences in the willingness to compromise between full time and part-time staff. For full-time staff any opportunity to learn relevant skills was acceptable even if there was a small price to pay (e.g. taking a day from the their annual leave to attend training), while for part-time staff, who felt that their training and career needs were not taken as seriously as full-time staff, were unwillingly to compromise. The restrictions imposed by the management could have easily divided the members of the Group with negative outcomes. Additionally full time staff have more to lose than part-time staff as their job with the Council was the main source of their income. The main reason the management could impose restrictions on the BWG was the fear of redundancy in a climate of cuts; without this it is doubtful if a situation such as this would have occurred in the first place.

Another weapon that was useful here for subversion was the Council's policies. Although it has equal opportunities policies, it does not implement them fully, there is a lack of commitment. Additionally the Investors In People does not require any linkages with equal opportunities and it was the combination of these that was used as a reason for forming the BWG. It is important to use the policies of the organisation in order to achieve the objectives as this is an effective weapon that organisations provide for those who wish to subvert. For those involved in training or teaching adults subversion has to be an option more now then ever before. My work requires me to go out and win contracts to pay for my salary and other costs. Given this, I am well aware that there will be situations where there will be groups of people within the community or working for organisations who may have limited or no funds for any sort of training to learn new skills or for research to be conducted which may be useful; I see it as an opportunity where possible to work with such groups to identify sources of funding for training or research and subvert where necessary in order for them to gain access to learning which can not only enhance their careers but also where possible politicise them. In the case cited above the BWG has now built up strong links with various community groups as result of working with one group.

This type of subversion can be possible in the present climate where adult educators within universities and in community based adult education are encouraged to be enterprising and bring in money for their departments; and until the funding climate changes for the better of us all I feel that there are real possibilities for subversion, and perhaps a little happiness.

Reference

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Vision, policy or accident? Critical explorations of the development of continuing education at a northern university, 1970-1995

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Preamble

The emphasis of this paper is upon exploration and reflection. The art of exploring recent history is not well used in continuing education. We react so often to the immediate and the occasional, and are so much caught up in the flux of events, that we do not often pause to reflect upon the larger processes which have taken us from where we were some time ago to where we are now. To do so, we need an explanatory and interpretative model which goes beyond both the deterministic and the narrative.

This paper takes the example of twenty five years of continuing education at Lancaster University and asks if there is a model of explanation appropriate to developments there. The emphasis is upon the analysis, not upon the detail of events. The author was an actor in these events throughout the period: the objectivity of this analysis must obviously be at risk.

The question

There is a framework of historical fact. Twenty-five years ago, in 1970, Lancaster University was six years old. It made no continuing education provision except for the occasional post-experience short course; it had no part-time undergraduates and was not a 'responsible body' for extra mural studies; it did, however, claim at the time to be exceptional among universities in welcoming mature undergraduate students. In 1969, the Lancaster Senate had considered the report of an ad hoc working party set up to consider if there was a 'need' for extra-mural studies at Lancaster. On looking at the working party's limited and cautious recommendations, the Senate decided to 'wait for Russell' (the Russell Committee on Adult Education, whose report was delayed until 1973) (Department of Education and Science, 1973). This was a normal university method of burying the issue.

Twenty-five years later, in 1995, Lancaster University has a Department of Continuing Education of forty-five staff of all grades with a current turnover of about £1,200,000 per annum. It houses the administrative unit of the Open College of the North West and has programmes of continuing vocational education and training, continuing professional development, liberal adult education, outreach to non traditional students, Summer residential credit and non credit provision, graduate studies and research and development. The University as a whole reported to the Continuing Education Record for 1993-94 provision of 300 FTEs of liberal adult education and 590 FTEs of continuing vocational education (USR, 1995).

This paper is not the place to chronicle the detail of this change between 1970 to 1995. Such a chronicle would show that the bulk of the development has taken place since 1987. It would also pick out at least two key events - the temporary secondment in 1979 of a member of staff part-time to re-visit the question of a University contribution to local adult education and the transformation in 1994 of an administrative unit into an academic department of continuing education at a time when some other universities were dismantling such departments and dispersing their functions. The chronicle might indicate that the 1979 move was undertaken half-heartedly by the University under local pressure and that the 1994 reorganisation was mainly a tidying up operation to bring what was now a large unit into the mainstream of university accountability (Percy, 1988).

That, then, is the framework of historical fact. In histories of British higher education or university continuing education to come, it might earn a line or two, or a footnote. But the question, how can the Lancaster development be explained, has merit. What does it show about British society, higher education, continuing education and continuing educators over the past twenty-five years? The paper will explore five types of answer to the question and seek to reach a synthesis.

Five possible answers

1. Societal

Can one say that the emergence of continuing education at Lancaster was simply a response to changes in the societal context in an analysis similar to those made, for example, of the evaluation of medical education in higher education in the early 19th century (Newman, 1957) and of the diversification of technological higher education in the United Kingdom at the turn of the 20th century? (Sanderson, 1972).

What changes in the societal context between 1970-1995 might form part of an analysis? One might, perhaps, refer to (i) economic change: the declining performance of the British economy with consequent political emphasis upon wealth production and upon the role of education in economic performance; (ii) political change: a government supported radical critique of many of society's institutions and their privileges, including universities, and a questioning of their productivity, relevance and reliance upon public subsidy; (iii) demographic and life-span change: changing patterns of work to the short- and part-time; emphasis on updating the work force; earlier retirement; increased unemployment; more leisure-time; 'greying' of the population; (iv) educational change: increased educational aspirations, opportunities and performance, reform of the school curriculum, development of further education, expansion of higher education; (v) international change, in particular the evolving place of the United Kingdom in Europe.

Certainly there seems to be prima facie validity in claiming that shifts and changes in continuing education are related to, mirrors of, occasioned by, even a response to such macro-changes in the societal context. In a general sense they must be, but is that saying much? Through what structures and mechanisms, through whose minds and actions, are macro-societal impulses transmitted to what happens on the ground at a single university? The obvious linkage appears to be the structure and culture of the higher education sector, of which Lancaster has been a part, and the movement of university continuing education within it.

2. British higher and adult education

It would take many thousands of words to document the changes of structure and culture of higher education in the period. The main milestones would be, for example, the success of the Open University; the evolution and assimilation of the polytechnic tradition, the growth in number of part-time undergraduate students, the reduction in unit costs; the ending of academic tenure; the declining status and comparative salaries of university teachers; the modularisation and credit-rating of curricula, the emergence of quality and research assessment; the transformation of the relatively independent University Grants Committee first to the Universities Funding Council and then to the Higher Education Funding Councils; the growth of managerialism; and the general emergence of a climate between universities of competing for scarce resources.

Between 1970 and 1995 the number of continuing education enrolments reported by universities in the United Kingdom grew by 223% (UACE, 1991). University continuing education departments have diversified from a simple fare of extra-mural studies (with perhaps a leavening of Forces adult education and summer schools) to a variegated range of activities including part-time degrees, continuing vocational education, access provision, training for adult educators and more. At the same time, polytechnics have provided a new model of university continuing education dispersed throughout their institutions without a single department or unit having a major or unique responsibility.

Higher education, and continuing education within it, has become a world in which institutions plan, compete, behave strategically, market, diversify funding, behave politically, watch their backs, emphasise their role in wealth creation, and look for opportunities. Many of the areas for manoeuvre - part-time degrees, work-based learning, non-traditional students, access provision - have come in the old universities often to be associated with the continuing education function. Is this, then, the explanation of Lancaster's continuing education development? But the explanation remains very general: how was it mediated to a single institution?

3. Lancaster University

Lancaster in the early 1960s had a clear institutional image of itself. It was 'new'; it was going to innovate in higher education (McClintock, 1974). Its culture was that of the past and the future. The past was residential and collegiate; the future lay with a broad-based civilising undergraduate curriculum influenced by the examples of Keele and Sussex and the expansion of student numbers confirmed by the Robbins Report (Committee on Higher Education, 1963).

The University was badly shaken by severe student troubles of the late 1960s and early 1970s and even more by repeated financial crises from the mid 1970s into the 1980s. In the mid to late 1980s a new culture emerged in the University. It rested on four principles: internationalism; research excellence; relevance; and financial entrepreneurialism. It is worthwhile asking what the dynamics are of the creation of such institutional cultures and values. There seems to be a process of negotiation of meanings and coalescing of related tendencies around easily understood symbols. External pressures, historical residues, interpretations of the situation by powerful actors and a groundswell of aspirations, understandings and expectations by all players seem to intermingle and, over time, produce a world picture acceptable to all (or which contains elements, at least, to which everyone can relate). That world picture could be taken as part of the explanation of the emergence of continuing education at Lancaster. But is there nothing intrinsic, about continuing education as a field of knowledge, which can add to this explanation?

4. Continuing education research and theory

Certainly in the period 1970-1995 there has been an increasing volume of continuing education research, and that research is now supported by an institutional superstructure. SCUTREA was founded in 1970; UACE has a research network; NIACE has had research projects and officers; and ACACE between 1978-1984 a wealth of commissioned research reports. In the 1980s, organisations such as UDACE and FEU commissioned and managed a remarkable series of research and development projects; in the 1990s UFC / HEFCE dedicated £4½ million to university continuing education research. During the period, too, *Studies in Adult Education* (founded in 1969) has grown in stature; other journals have followed.

Nevertheless, the overall judgement must be that most of the resulting corpus of research has not been fundamental in nature and we await the development of significant theory. There are exceptions (but it would be invidious to mention them). The research has often been policy-orientated; statistical; descriptive; or 'developmental'. It seems difficult to argue that continuing education as a field of knowledge has yet reached such maturity that a university such as Lancaster would feel compelled to be associated with it.

5. Visions and values of leading actors

Institutional histories of higher education normally concentrate upon the roles of individuals and their ideas. However, there is little evidence at Lancaster that the shape, size or nature of continuing education by 1995 had been envisaged, foreseen, planned or aspired to by any of the relevant actors in the situation. All of the three Vice Chancellors who led the University 1964-1995 were lukewarm or neutral about university continuing education. Of the more powerful or influential professors and heads of department on Senate during the twenty-five years, none was an unflinching sponsor of a continuing education mission for the University.

Of course, the author, and those of his colleagues who came to join him in the 1980s, had ideas (even visions) of what they would like to achieve. An examination of public documents - committee papers, briefing documents, position papers prepared by them in the 1980s and 1990s - would not, however, reveal those ideas or visions. In the political arena of the University, agreement to action came because it appeared that it would bring money, reputation, students, allies or favour with a funding body or other external agency, not because of its intrinsic merits.

Synthesis

We set out to look for an explanatory model which would make sense of the development of continuing education at Lancaster University. Essentially we have discounted explanations which attribute complex outcomes to visions or plans of particular individuals or collective decisions of heterogeneous institutions. Of course, individuals contribute, but are mainly allowed to do so because the time and context is right; institutions make decisions but often these are formal ratifications of prior settlements negotiated by interested internal parties.

We have also largely discounted an analysis which suggests that between 1970 and 1995 the corpus of continuing education theory and research established continuing education as a field of knowledge to which a university such as Lancaster was naturally attracted. We recognise, however, that the considerable institutional superstructure which continuing education has developed during the period has made continuing education acceptable in terms of the externals of research organisation.

We have acknowledged that any explanatory model would necessarily find a place for the macro trends of societal change. The difficulty lies in describing the linkages between those trends and the levers of development and decision-making at sectoral and institutional level. Essentially, our explanation must emphasise at the (higher education) sectoral level and the institutional (University) level both structural and cultural factors. In the higher education sector, government became more dirigiste as it sought to encourage its version of needed economic and social change. Its chief tools were the Funding Councils with their codes of transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness. The culture, consequently, of the sector became more competitive, opportunistic, flexible and, indeed open to change as institutions adapted to cope with the pressures upon them. At the level of Lancaster University, the structure remained in essence much as it had done since the foundation - with a balance of power between departments and the central administration - although some internal commentators claim to detect movements to managerialism and centralisation. The culture did, however, shift to one which harmonised well with the goals of the Funding Council and, in emphasising both relevance and financial entrepreneurialism, opened the doors to new developments in continuing education which could justify themselves in those terms.

What has happened with continuing education at Lancaster has been made possible by these structures and this culture. It is a product of the times and as such is vulnerable. Despite the parameters of the new world of higher education, a department which is not like other departments would do well to assimilate itself to the mainstream. Ironically, the changed Funding Council requirements for the funding of liberal adult education may help in this respect. However, this historical analysis does suggest that the Lancaster Department of Continuing Education would be wise to address the other key features of the Lancaster collective culture which emerged in the 1980s - international reputation and research excellence.

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Discourse and culture

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This paper suggests that academic criteria for determining and processing knowledge are culturally biased. It draws on research findings from different cultural groups who were new adult learners. The research findings illuminate three connected arguments which derive from a poststructuralist analysis of culture, discourse and power. The first argument claims that some cultural values and forms of knowledge are not recognised or represented within the academic discourse for continuing education. Secondly this discourse promotes a hierarchical strata of power relations which serve to marginalise certain groups of people from equal access to education. Thirdly, within the need to recognise different and diverse discourses, should be an understanding of the influence of time, space and individual life events, on the generation of knowledge and truth. Space does not allow for in depth exploration of the theoretical framework but a brief summary is as follows:

An analysis of philosophical, educational and feminist interpretations of culture and academic discourse suggests that objective thought originates from subjective interpretations of meaning (for example Weiner, 1994). These meanings acquire their significance through their development into a set of common cultural values. *Cultural capital* accrues when one culture legitimates its superiority over another and judges all other values against its own internalised subjectivity (Bourdieu, 1993; Rabinow, 1984). The culture of *academic discourse* is particularly protected by its own patriarchal, institutional and class power structures. When alternative cultures attempt to connect with this structure the disjunction between new and established cultures may result in new learning. Marginalisation occurs, however, if there is no recognition between cultures of new or different values or different subjective interpretations of meaning (Jarvis, 1992). Feminist thinking has attempted to develop alternative discourses within a post structural framework which gives credence to different forms of thinking (for example Weedon, 1987). There is now a need to explore their applicability within other subcultures - particularly for those sectors of the population most on the margins of academic respectability. The empirical study tries to identify discourses of alternative knowledge and reality by allowing marginalised groups to speak on their own terms.

The empirical study

The research in progress explores discourses from three different groups, each representing a combination of gender, race, class and disability issues from cultural viewpoints which are rarely represented within academic institutions. The aim of the research was to highlight some of the above, poststructuralist theories in contexts which demonstrate polarity from, rather than proximity to, academia. The notions of academic discourse and reverse discourse are identified in the research at two levels.

On the one hand the literature has given credence to the argument that discourses operate as *circuits of power* within institutions. These circuits of power, whilst allowing for diversity and individuality, do so within constructed boundaries. The hypothesis may be drawn, therefore, that each department within higher education will have different, but connected circuits of power and discourse frameworks. Discourse within a department of continuing education might conceivably have its own culture of meanings, expectations of adult learners and ways of promoting and teaching short courses in the non-academic world. The goals of continuing education, however, will also include aspects of the institution's more centralised themes for critical analysis, curriculum relevance, objectivity and the location of truth, normality or knowledge. Each individual's interpretation of these discourses within the continuing education department will be influenced by his or her own life experiences. Nevertheless, they will also have been shaped by the institution's dominant, shared and norm referenced meanings which create certain *regimes of truth* and which perpetuate their own cultural values.

The reliability of this hypothesis has yet to be tested in depth. Statistically, however, higher education institutions, and in particular the 'old' universities, demonstrate a cultural norm which is controlled by 'white, middle class men' (Lancaster University Equal Opportunities Report, 1990). The assumption therefore follows that cultural capital will reflect the values of the power holders.

The exploration of reverse discourses, amongst groups on the very margins of formal education, is in progress. Lancaster University's Department of Continuing Education established an outreach programme in 1991 with the objective to encourage participation in university adult continuing education by those who are under-represented within existing provision. Previous adult education theories link educational participation to emotional, psychological and cultural influences, as well as practical issues (for example, McClusky, 1963; Miller, 1967; Jarvis, 1987). Writers such as Cross (1981), Merriam and Cafarella (1991) and Sargant (1991) highlight the need however for research evidence which examines these factors in detail, particularly in relation to marginalised factions. The outreach programme provided a context for investigating empirically the hypothesis that the cultural capital of academic discourse refracts different, but equally valid strategies for learning, interpretation and analysis. At the same time the research sought to investigate what forms of discourse were creating a disjunction between university continuing education courses and the learning interests of marginalised groups.

The three research groups were selected partly for their limited, previous participation in formal provision through institutions and also because each learner group represented a culture which is statistically underrepresented in adult education. They were: ten working class, older adults from a small, isolated industrial town; ten people with disabilities, most of whom attended a social services day centre; and ten women from the Indian sub continent, now living in two separate religious communities.

The interviews

At this stage, only phase 1 of the participant interviews has been documented. Each adult was interviewed in their choice of language and location by a role model tutor or course co-ordinator from the outreach team. The interviews lasted between one hour and 90 minutes. They were semi-structured, and encouraged the respondents to give life stories to contextualise their educational and personal values. The extract chosen to illuminate the theory concentrates on separate interviews with ten disabled adults. As I was the most consistent tutor for this group I carried out the interviews, though the views of role model tutors were also recorded.

The analysis here concentrates primarily on two interviews. It discusses their experience of disability and schooling, along with their educational expectations as adults.

Disability: family, school, work and other agencies

Both interviewees, Gillian and Paul were born with cerebral palsy. Both were able to walk as teenagers though they spent considerable time in hospital during their school days, attended special school and shared similar educational and subsequent employment struggles. Their stories are interpreted through the concepts of **knowledge-power relations; circuits of power; cultural capital; regimes of truth; false consciousness** and **reverse discourse.**

Perhaps most noticeable is the way their lives were shaped by institutional interventions (school and hospitals) which ultimately defined their patterns of behaviour as disabled adults, their awareness of entitlements and even access to knowledge and the curriculum. Gillian, for example, is denied mainstream education because of an identified walking impairment rather than mental agility. Spheres of *false consciousness*, which influence her educational opportunities, extend beyond the school. Even her parents reject a belated offer for Gillian to attend mainstream school at the age of 14, believing she has received all the education necessary for a disabled child. In their consciousness, reality is different for physically disabled people because they are measured against one set of norm references which have no expectations for educational progression or employment. When Gillian leaves school, her economic survival depends on her ability to construct alternative discourses and life patterns in order to access the same work opportunities as the rest of her family. Contrary to the common pattern of support from working class parents in many of the interviews, and in spite of a loving and caring family background, Gillian is left to her own job-seeking devices. After following the prescribed discourse of procedures for disabled people, dependent on a green card identity label, Gillian rejects this system. She constructs her own boundaries for truth, based on her experience of reality, rather than the institutionally defined one. At the next job interview she withholds her green card, thus depriving the agency of the knowledge which gives it power over her. Instead she tells the interviewers she has received a mainstream education. When the employment agency and employer are presented with this alternative image of reality, as a result of withheld knowledge, the balance of power shifts sufficiently for Gillian to obtain a job.

For disabled people medical assumptions override educational and work potential. In Paul's case his schooling is punctured by a cultural capital of objectified assessments about his medical needs. Although Paul does not challenge these childhood medical observations he perceives an alternative reality about continued medical interventions in relation to his work capabilities as an adult. For example, he describes his dismissal on health grounds from a trainee commi chef's post after completing more than two years in the company:

"A fortnight before me 18th birthday they just sent me for a medical and the medical board said I was unfit for work ... although I'd worked for them for two and a half years."

Perhaps of greater impact is the long term effect on the individual's own consciousness of discourses whose regimes of truth appear to contradict the repeated realities for the individual. For instance, Paul recounts several attempts to get jobs throughout his adult life and as many examples of achievement in those jobs until he receives a medical which claims he is unfit for any work. The effect of these experiences eventually makes him question the discourse of meanings for words such as 'rights' and 'access' in relation to his own ability to challenge other people's interpretations. He comments on the long term effect on his confidence:

"It knocks it because they're not giving you the chance to do what you want to do, then if you fight for your rights they think you shouldn't fight for your rights."

Disjunction, therefore, becomes a confusing experience which can serve to disengage people from, rather than encourage, participation in learning activities. Discourses around the meaning and purpose of education are similarly constructed within an excluding, rather than inclusive, framework. For these interviewees meanings are interpreted in a class as well as disability context.

Expectations and educational goals

Educational discourse is depicted here as two strands - a discourse of procedure for accessing learning and a discourse of meanings which validate the idea and value of formal learning. The outreach programme emphasises a personalised approach to learning opportunities. This has meant identifying criteria which make overt connections between the learner and course content. For example, the notion of an adult as an autonomous learner who makes independent decisions to attend courses by viewing external publicity is challenged. The outreach programme takes account of the role and value of education and learning as referenced against a set of truths and norms which were determined at school, home and work. The balance of power determining these truths is defined through class norms as well as a false consciousness which simply negates the possibility of learning or work with a disability. Learning obstacles therefore become the criteria for abstention, rather than hurdles to meet on the way to educational opportunity.

The outreach strategy is to approach people differentially about courses. The value of learning is re-constructed in a context which recognises learning obstacles as an integral aspect of any marketing process. Three 'norms' are addressed within the boundaries of the participants' own reference points. Transport availability becomes the first point of persuasion. Secondly course content is described in relation to its personal value for survival in a hostile world. This may relate to a community role, or it may be an initial confidence building step. Thirdly, participants are invited directly to participate - an experience in stark contrast to their many comments about 'no encouragement' of earlier years. Interview responses from individual respondents demonstrate the present day context for their own versions of truth with regard to education. In particular individuals distinguish between forms of knowledge which they have acquired and forms of knowledge which seem to have authority and therefore status within the education system. Several examples indicate that official education is viewed as something external to the interviewees' lives.

Some see no progression relationship between further and higher education, while others explicitly exclude themselves from its accessibility:

"I thought they were all, you know toffee nose jobs - just posh people - you know like Eton, Harrow, Oxford, Cambridge. I didn't, nobody told me about this sort of thing."

More significant are the associations the respondents do make between what is valued education and learning which they themselves undertake. Many talk about desired practical careers and preferences for practical subjects at school, such as hairdressing, catering, art and craft. Few, however, felt any encouragement to pursue such subjects within school. Such perceptions of value attached to personal interests are reflected in their attitudes now. In the course of his interview, Paul, for instance, reveals a list of first aid qualifications which he omitted from his questionnaire of educational achievements, stating simply:

"I didn't think that would qualify, actually, that's why I didn't bother."

Individually, then, the respondents reveal different examples of consciousness which have served to both stimulate reverse discourses of struggle against existing power-knowledge structures as well as perpetuate norm references which maintain their status outside those boundaries of power and knowledge.

Summary

Some common themes throughout this extract, placed in a context of poststructuralist theory, are the influence of legitimated power and institutional discourse over people's self image and layers of consciousness. In most cases these institutional influences extended into other spheres of life and behaviour so that parents and work colleagues perpetuated the attitudes and expectations from people in hospital, school and employment agencies. The themes show how disability is inappropriately norm referenced compared to literature interpretations of adult roles in terms of independence, autonomy and economic self-sufficiency (Knowles, 1990). The consequent subjugation of the interviewees by those in authority is subtly legitimated. The combined effect of individual experiences means the interviewees absorb images of educational value and access to learning which contrast overtly with institutional procedures. One instance of this effect is demonstrated in how the respondents manage their own lives according to their socio-economic circumstances. The economic situation of working class respondents helps determine communication systems which are local, cost free and which require minimum forward planning. Discourses of communication which move outside these criteria (such as a regional brochure which offers courses over a wide geographical area and which requires posting a pre-enrolment fee), inevitably place these working class adults at a disadvantage for accessing mainstream provision.
Whilst the outreach programme did legitimate a range of alternative processes for accessing knowledge, the interviewees' expectations indicated several conflicting layers of struggle between perceptions of publicly valued knowledge and personally valued skills (such as Paul's dismissal of his first aid qualifications). The additional struggle for working class disabled people results in a clash between discourses associated with their physical condition and those of

working class expectations for physical labour work patterns. This conflict doubly diminishes the range of potential skills for disabled people, who must then struggle against class and disability expectations. The respondents' stories of struggle demonstrate the value of reverse discourses for emotional survival as well as the existence of subcultures whose boundaries reflect the excluding reference points of their own, wider culture.

Such observations suggest several issues for consideration by university adult educators. Some adults are excluded, by definition, from the notion of an adult learner - economic values placed on education and learning gain contrast unfavourably with the personal circumstances of many potential learners. More significantly the nature of knowledge itself and what is acceptable academic subject matter pre-defines valuable knowledge, as does the relationship between objectivity and experience in defining truth. Furthermore, regimes of truth are perpetuated by agencies or institutional discourses through norm reference points, such as medical definitions of work suitability, which may have no validity for the individual subjects. In academic discourse, this process has the effect of excluding alternative forms of, and means of deriving, knowledge. The potential consequence of this effect is to marginalise cultures which have no direct influence on the legitimation and objectification of knowledge.

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Democracy and personal empowerment: factors contributing to positive training outcomes

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Background

The University of Wales, Lampeter is situated in rural west Wales. Lampeter, the main market town, with a population of 3000 inhabitants, services the Teifi Valley which is as beautiful as it is remote. The town of Carmarthen lies to the south and Aberystwyth to the north. Between these relatively small market towns smaller villages and dispersed farm settlements are scattered quite liberally. It is still a strongly agricultural area and the business community is characterised by small, often family based firms, employing at the most a dozen employees. A business is considered large in this area if they employ in the region of 60 people, but these are few and far between.

The University being situated in such a location has developed strong community links through the work of Continuing Education. These links have been established through the training courses which have been developed over an eleven year period, with Access being offered within the department for the past five years. Consequently the University has developed community partnerships in which training and education have at last come to be recognised as an important catalyst for local community and economic regeneration. Alongside these wider local encounters and really the main emphasis of this paper will be to outline how this works out on a day to day basis. Very real achievement has been attained by many attending our programmes over the eleven year period and the focus of the courses on offer has been, and still is, a human centred approach to training. This approach focuses on both individual and group development and empowerment.

The course draws people from a wide variety of backgrounds, again reflecting the unique, and highly rural location of the department. The courses were initially established to counteract skills shortages and to encourage women to develop their own enterprises. The first beneficiaries were unemployed and under-employed women and new graduates. The first Women Into New Technology Course which started eleven years ago, subsequently widened its brief to include women returners as well as women and men in low skilled work who were prepared to leave their employment to acquire new skills which would help them further their careers. The results of this initiative were reported as favourable on educational, social and economic grounds, (Kirby 1985; Roffe 1995).

There have, of course, been many influences on these courses over the years, of both internal and external origin. Not least of these have been three changes of Course Director. Each has brought individual expertise and interests in curriculum development and particular expertise in enterprise skills, women's issues and counselling respectively (Inglis, 1989). From the initial Women Into New Technology Course, the courses are now run under the umbrella name of New Directions and New Technology. Despite such changes, a continuing strand of the programme that has been encouraged on all courses, has been the development of the individual through democracy and empowerment.

Development of democracy and empowerment in the learning programme

New Directions courses set out to co-operatively identify skills and add additional skills in Information Technology and Business Studies. Interwoven throughout are elements of personal development, guidance and counselling. Together, these act as a catalyst for individuals to choose the most viable future option for themselves. Our aim is to motivate individuals to contribute actively to their own development and the communities in which they live, and a significant factor in this is self-empowerment. (Logan, 1994) However, when people join a course, whether they have no educational qualifications or are well qualified (several have had higher degrees and doctorates), they inevitably lack confidence and a belief in their own abilities. In identifying their skills and acquiring new ones, particularly those of Information Technology, self esteem is raised and the individual end result is often a choice far different from that envisaged for themselves at the start of the course, for example, someone with no formal qualifications may go on to further or higher education.

The process by which this is achieved is accomplished through a four stage methodology, each stage of which carries a different degree of guidance and support. These phases are (a) pre-entry, (b) at entry, (c) during lifetime of course and (d) after the programme.

(a) *Pre-entry.* At this stage every course applicant is invited for an informal interview with the Course Director in order to ensure that our programmes match the individual's needs. If the course appears inappropriate for the individual, advice is given on a wide range of training opportunities available in the wider geographic area in order that a more suitable choice can be made. This is intended to help the potential trainee to overcome barriers of access to information caused by the isolated nature of our geographic location.

One common characteristic shared by all potential course participants is that they wish to make a change in their lives, even though they might not be able to specify the exact nature of this change at this point in time. By making their first tentative approach to the department, they have started making choices and begun to recognise this need for change. This is the first and perhaps the most important barrier they have to cross. Our training offer is therefore based on the understanding that we will help an individual on condition that they in turn will help themselves. We offer a pro-active programme in which their contribution is equally as important as that of the course tutors.

In the eventual selection of individuals, consideration is given to the potential benefit of the course to the individual as well as the contribution that individual will make to the wider group dynamics.

(b) *Entry* and (c) *During the life of the course.* At the outset of the course further emphasis is placed on both individual needs and group democracy. Individuals are encouraged to identity areas of interest and knowledge within the wider framework of the course. The course content is then negotiated between the group and the Course Director and confirmed at this stage.

Personal development falls into two main but related areas: individual and group development. Three individual assessment meetings are held with each participant and the Course Director. To complement this, a more informal open door policy is practised, whereby the course director is available for counselling and guidance at any other time. Through these meetings the trainees are encouraged to recognise their own potential roles in both their personal development and the wider context of the group.

The trainees' learning styles, experience and knowledge are complemented within the group setting. The active inter-dependent learning by means of the group cannot be stressed enough. What we find is that as the members of the group begin to relax and get to know each other, they gain confidence to open up, talk from their experience and give their points of view; to value what they and others have to say, contest and disagree. This group association is key to this process of change, empowerment and the raising of confidence of the individuals. Each group develops its own distinctive history, culture, codes and meanings over time that identify them as being part of that group. The group bond is often strong and may continue beyond the duration of the course.

Self evaluation and course evaluation is carried out by each trainee. The course management process is engaged with the chair elected from the course. Such monitoring of the course takes place on a weekly basis through group meetings and the chair then feeds backs to and negotiates with the Course Director.

(d) *After the Learning Programme*. In terms of self development and progression, trainees are welcomed to return to the department to discuss their goals with former tutors and the Course Director. Personal networks are important communication channels in rural communities and in this context, the actual course of studies represents only one component of the total package that we offer trainees. This includes not only the skills needed to advance an enterprise, return to the workplace or voluntary work, but also to identify with our organisation. This involves a process whereby we as an organisation contract with the trainees to provide effective individual and group development which includes counselling before, during and after the course and a sense of belonging to our network.

A way to overcome the difficulties of poor infrastructure is through networking. This has taken one form in working to build long-term relationships with former trainees by keeping up personal contacts, a regular network newsletter and the organisation of special seminars. In this way we are able to maintain profiles of past courses and their destinations. Another form of networking is through co-operating with other advisory agencies.

Outcomes: quantitative and qualitative

Post-course support is offered to trainees in order to help them with their individual action plans and a bi-annual review of all previous course participants is carried out in order to maintain an up-to-date record base of former students. This process gives us some confidence in the outcomes of our training programmes with less than 5% of trainees' destinations or positions unknown over the past six years.

To aid the process of networking, a Presentation Day has been introduced in which trainees from this course and others offered by Continuing Education, are invited to an event with a keynote speaker. To date, some nine such days have been organised with a frequency of two a year. Growing from this idea of a Presentation Day has been the notion of 'landmark conferences', in which a contemporary theme of women's training and management is explored through keynote speakers and participatory workshops.

With the passage of time many people have achieved positions of greater responsibility and are therefore able to contribute for fully to the economic health of the area. As one example, albeit exceptional, a former trainee has become the Chair of the leading enterprise agency in Wales, Antur Teifi, and the only female director of West Wales Training and Enterprise Council. From both positions she is able to demonstrably contribute to the economic regeneration of the valley. This case has another value, because it demonstrates the latent and actual talent in the locality that has been under-exploited. In comparison with many training managers who provide women returners courses, and with whom we have contact, the standard of trainees on the Lampeter course is very high. This in turn reflects the commitment of people who wish to live and work in the area, often because of family and community reasons. The relatively small spread of industrial sectors limits the employment of professionally qualified women as do poor roads which create difficulties in travelling to work outside the area. Lack of affordable child care also limits the possibilities of those already economically disadvantaged.

The achievements of participants are followed up six months after the completion of a course and this reveals that typically 60 per cent are in employment, 30 per cent in further training or further and higher education and some 10 per cent looking for work.

The influence of the course on the local community and economic scene

The course has developed a strong reputation in local enterprises and communities. One reason we have found for this is that many of our past trainees are now in influential managerial positions in local organisations and are able to act as champions to internal and external enquirers. This has yielded an unexpected benefit for our other courses in that we are able to place students with relative ease through a network of former trainees.

The process of empowering our former trainees has led some to take an active role as community volunteers. As a direct result, a programme has been designed and is currently being delivered under the theme 'Options in Volunteering'. This course draws strongly from the experiences of New Directions courses but is run with a focus on increased community participation with the support of eighteen local organisations from the voluntary sector.

Ethical considerations

Our observations are that the democratic process of tuition and the adoption of a human centred approach to our training programmes, allows ethical concerns and considerations to surface. These concerns include discussion of equal opportunities. environmental or 'green' issues, and the ethical boundaries of creating demand, pricing policies and values in business. Evidence shows that given our current and past local economic climate, small firms have to fight to survive and are forced to give such ethical considerations a relatively low priority. (Owen, 1993; Wilkins, 1994)

The participation in the democratic processes we encourage within our training programme, vis-a-vis financial survival of companies within our locality, is a conundrum we, as trainers, have to face. The partial result is an introduction into the democratic process of the idea of the need to compromise. This sense of compromise will differ from individual to individual and is developed within the group context.

In conclusion, we have found that many of our trainees underestimate their own abilities. By providing a supportive, encouraging and confidence building environment, we empower these individuals to make realistic decisions, in terms of abilities, values and opportunities, about future career options. Once this empowerment is embraced, many apply it to further spheres of their lives both in terms of personal accomplishment and home and family relationships.

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German adult education in East Germany after unification: picking up the pieces

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Introduction

The "social, political and economic union" agreed by FRG and GDR in their 1990 agreement on unification has not turned out to be what many citizens of both German states had expected. The reference to East and West Germans as "OSSI" and "WESSI" describes the strongly perceived distinction between people divided by forty years of life in fundamentally different systems. The "union" has turned out to be a "take over", a turnaround (Wende) which has turned the lives of former GDR citizens upside down. "Democracy" and "market orientation" has led for many of them to unemployment, loss of earnings and pensions, increases in rent and a general upheaval in personal lives/biographies. A society in which full employment, also for women was guaranteed, and a social network to support employees through generous child care facilities, holiday subsidies existed - has to come to terms with a fundamentally different approach. The impact of unification on education providers was naturally significant. I will concentrate on Adult Education within the framework of the new FRG where distinction now is to be made between "Neue Bundesländer" the new federal states (ie. former GDR) and "Alte Bundesländer" the old federal states (ie. former West Germany).

Brief outline on the position of adult education in the FRG and GDR

Both systems have/had roots in the "Volkshochschule" movement (Folk High School; VHS) of the Weimar Republic, that followed their own distinctive way of development according to the prevalent controlling economic political system. The Allies had set up their own distinctive provision which underlined their differences.

Phase 1 - 40's and 50's.
The "VHS" (Volkshochschule) has always been one of the most important providers in both separate states. Volkshochschulen had been in operation again from as early as 1946, but after an initial joint congress of adult education in the Volkshochschule a, "split between West German and East German VHS had appeared before even the foundation of two separate German states" (Siebert, 1994:55). The Western VHS was influenced by ideas prevalent in the Weimar Republic, modernised by the addition of "international understanding" and the idea of "partnership" (Dikau, in Siebert, 1994:55). The trade unions had decided not to opt for their own provision to prepare workers for class struggle, but to agree to the establishment of a special section of the VHS - the "Arbeit und Leben" (Labour and Life) organisation. Pluralism of providers (churches, political parties, etc) and pluralism in the context of capitalist US dominated society was another distinctive feature. Adult education was seen for many educationists as a provision for an "active minority" to fight against "Kulturverfall" (cultural decay). Antifascism and recent history did not feature in the programme and was not reflected upon. I am using Siebert's recent contribution to give a brief outline in the Soviet Occupied Zone (SBZ) the emphasis was from the

beginning on the integration of adult education into a state controlled public education system. The objectives of this system were :

a) socialist re-education (Umerziehung).
b) the establishment of the so called "Zweiter Bildungsweg" ("Second Path to Education") for young people (peasants and workers).
c) the development of vocational education closely linked with the workplace.

The VHS took on the task to set up courses to gain advanced school and vocational qualifications for the existing workforce. Special outreach centres were set up in work places which later became "Betriebsakademien", (factory academies) and village academies, clubs and Houses of Culture ("Kulturhäuser" - a kind of arts & community centre) "Urania", a society for the promotion of popular science was set up to provide adult education. 1956 saw the adoption of the "Bitterfelder Weg" to establish "a socialist workers culture to see the worker not only as a consumer, but also a producer of cultural goods" (Siebert, 1994:5)

Phase 2 - the 60's
The sixties proved to be a decade of great changes in both states. In the research literature this period in general is referred to as the time of "pragmatic change". (Realistische Wende) (1). The "brain drain" from East to West of highly skilled workers moving to the West had been stopped in 1961 through the building of the Berlin Wall and subsequent closing of the borders. Migrant workers had to support the economy and international competition on the world market led to an increased demand of the highly qualified workforce. Georg Picht's warning of a "Bildungskatastrophe" (educational catastrophe) and recommendations on how to improve the education system led to an improved, better funded system which was planned on a long term basis. Chairs of Adult Education were established. Programmes changed, learning outcome oriented assessment was introduced. Changes were brought forward which had been implemented in GDR 10 years before (Siebert, 1994:16).Target group oriented programmes, integration of political education and vocational training, unpaid educational leave ("Bildungsurlaub") were introduced in the West (Siebert, 1994:61). The Chamber of People's Deputies ("Volkskammer") adopted in 1970 principles of continuing education of employees and in 1977 the new code of labour law guaranteed the right for supportive measures when taking up continuing education (Siebert, 1994:64). (The principles of socialist education are as follows :
- unity of development of personality and productivity -
- unity of learning and work,
- unity of the socialist education system,
- unity between the interests of individuals, state and society,
- unity of collectivity and individuality,
- unity of Arts, Science and Ideology (Siebert, 1994: 65).

In the East a highly developed system of pathways into higher education via adult education was achieved. Subjects which belonged to the traditional liberal adult education canon like languages and information technology were taught at a variety of institutions.

Phase 3 - the 70's
In the East these were the years of economic and political advance characterised by a limited "liberalisation" towards the West and

improved German German and international relations. In the West the education system was renewed. Concepts of comprehensive education were put into practice. The number of school leavers with university entrance qualifications increased from 6% in 1960 to 30% in 1980 (Siebert, 1994:61). The status of adult education providers was enhanced and enshrined in federal legislation. The VHS developed a highly acclaimed certificate programme, access programmes were extended, moves were made towards the integration of general education and vocational training.

Phase 4 - the 80's

These years have been marked by the recession which left cuts in public funds in the West. Market orientation of providers' programmes was demanded. Qualifications were seen as the key to dealing with the rising numbers of the unemployed. At the same time, society in West Germany was in crisis. Social support systems decreased in importance, the "Social Net" became less reliable.

In the East the recession hit people hard. The people's support of the state waned in the wake of the 40th anniversary of the East German state.

Phase 5- the 90's

The "take over of the GDR" or the "union of two states" (depending on your view point) by the Federal Republic has led to a destruction of the East German education system as a whole. Existing structures have been abolished, new, especially managerial staff has been brought in from the West, existing staff either lost their jobs (2) or had to accept re-training and smaller pay packets than their western counterparts working alongside them. This is commonly referred to as "Buschzulage" (roughly translated as "bush bonus" for people who dared to set foot into the "wild unknown" of the new federal states). This has, not surprisingly, led to dissatisfaction and disillusionment of many "Ossis" whether engaged in education as a tutor/teacher/lecturer or as a learner (3).

The VHS have escaped the restructuring of the adult education system relatively well whereas "Kulturhäuser" (Houses of Culture) and societies of Urania had to close, the network of VHS remained and has been organised as the Volkshochschule association, forming its own new federal organisations (4).

The programme profile of the VHS had changed, as secondary education to gain school qualifications has become less important, but taken up the Western emphasis on language and computing courses and leisure oriented provision (5). As far as it is possible to establish, the majority of former GDR/VHS employees seems to have been able to keep their job (Opelt, 1993:216).

The "Deutsche Volkshochschulverband" has set up links very rapidly with Eastern VHS and incorporated them into the association, providing training and material for employees (ie. the project" Alltagsorientierung in den neuen Bundesländern - Unter demokratischen und marktwirtschaftlichen Bedingungen entscheiden lernen. Dezember 1994 DIE and a multitude of other projects. Several Eastern and Western VHS set up collaborative projects. One example to mention is the educational study tour/ educational leave or "Bildungsurlaub", of the Bremen VHS in Rostock in the East. The work focused on environmental and women's issues which initially appeared to be apparent in the West only, but then were seen from a different perspective, ie. problems which were in the making in former GDR because of the changes. Siebert describes the desperate situation in

Germany where "economic development and high unemployment turn out to be a fertile soil for social envy, extremism of the right and xenophobia" (Siebert, 1994:71).The uptake of continuing adult education is comparatively high in the United Germany. W. Rudolph welcomes the fact that unification and the vocational training laws will not only not place restrictions on already existing provisions and measures of adult education but sees the opening of new opportunities in this area (Rudolph, 1992:134). Siebert and Opelt point out the enormous demands that are on East Germans to adapt to a new society which asks of them to change "ethical values and to come to terms even with new road signs" (Siebert, 1994:71). The need to learn a multitude of everyday skills and behavioural patterns has to be acknowledged. Old skills have to be re-evaluated, forgotten, questioned. Opelt does not view the high participation figures (36% in the West and 38% in the East) in continuing education as entirely positive. 2.5 million people who took part in vocational education and continuing vocational education, ie. re-training programmes do not appear in the unemployment statistics. What will happen if they don't find a job after training, she asks, and calls the situation the "quiet before the storm" (Opelt, 1993:213-4). "If workplace, profession and region offer no employment perspectives it is easily taken as a cynicism to put unemployed or potentially unemployed into re-training and other training schemes" (Opelt, 1993:215).

Another distinctive feature of the new "education market" in the East is that new private providers have been flooding the country with courses of low quality. Many institutions have closed down - too many had been founded in the wake of unification, either in the hope of fast cash by unscrupulous providers or by Eastern employees looking at setting up a training organisation as a job creation scheme for themselves.

Issues

v. Küchler/Kade stated that "the transformation process of adult education in the new federal states provides the opportunity to reconsider your own position and prejudices in a critical manner and to reflect on the impact the changes in the structures of adult education have on the federal republic as a whole" (v. Küchler and Kade, 1992:12).

It seems to me that there is a distinctive gap between the expectations and actual practice. There was for one, not even the option of evaluating concepts which have proven to be successful ie. the "Betriebsakademien"(work place based training centres) which in conjunction with other providers contributed to a highly skilled workforce in the East and the polytechnic comprehensive education in schools- the dual qualification schemes which allowed to gain university entrance qualifications and a skilled workers certificate at the same time. The market forces which swept a wave of market providers into the new federal states, have deepened the mistrust of citizens into the new system. The "Volkshochschule" has to be praised for setting up initiatives for tutor organisers to work on a more equal basis on staff development issues. A question to be investigated remains - why have the VHS in former GDR remained? One might speculate that beyond the obvious advantage of an already existing network - which was market led anyway - the idea of an "ideologically untainted" system and workforce, which allowed easier cooperation with the West German system was high on the agenda.

Although the take up of political education programmes is equally low in the West and the East (6) people seem to have been politicised by the changes, even if they might not put it in these terms.

How can these developments be seen as relevant to Britain? Despite Germany's unique historical development several issues of importance can be identified.

A pluralism of providing institutions is not a guarantee for quality education.

Public - i.e. communal providers are viewed by learners and practitioners as the most reliable source of education and training.

Private providers are not able to compete on the market because of quality issues.

Certificated programmes are in demand. A tendency can be identified towards qualification oriented learning on one hand to courses which deal with personal development and growth in a society which places high emphasis on employment and material values but offers no employment.

Participation in adult education will only increase if there is real motivation to take up learning either in order to improve job prospects or to fulfil personal ambitions. Participation in cultural education in non-formal provision,(ie. museums, libraries, theatres) has decreased in the East due to lack of finances of providers and by the public. The time of hope, confidence and commitment referred to in the conference theme is applicable only in small parts to adult education in East Germany now.

The survival of the Volkshochschule is an occasion for hope.

Notes

(1) a term used by Siebert coined by Hans Tietgens.

(2) A detailed study of the "Abwicklung" (ie. processing) which is a euphemism for the closure of GDR institutions and the consequent loss of work places for their employees is waiting to be written.

(3) compare for example Siegfried Wolf, Worte in den Wind gesprochen. Zeitschrift Für Pädagogik 1991 pp. 13-26).

(4) compare B. Winger.

(5) There were 1000 fulltime organisers in addition to 10,000 part time lecturers just in the VHS (Siebert, 1994:69).

(6) Only 1 % take it up in East and West. (Opelt, 1993:217).

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Starting with self: life history approaches to training adult educators

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A life history approach

This paper comprises reflections midway through the first year of the Postgraduate Diploma in Adult Learning and Life Histories based at the Centre for Continuing Education in the University of Sussex. Ours is one of several new courses for adult educators which use a life history approach. Recent books, journal articles and conferences have begun to situate such developments within a blossoming international 'life history movement' and its more specific applications in teaching and educational research (Alheit, 1995; Armstrong, 1987; Cambridge Journal of Education, 1990; Dominice, 1990; Hoar, et al, 1994; Middleton, 1993; Miller, 1993; Ribbens, 1993; Thomson, 1993; West, 1995). This paper is very much about work-in-progress, exploring issues which have arisen on the programme and which highlight wider concerns about 'starting with self' in professional development courses. It is my perspective as programme convenor and co-teacher, and will complement the SCUTREA paper by course participants, 'Autobiography in an Academic Context' (Hargreaves, et al, 1995).

The one year, part time Postgraduate Diploma, which commenced in Autumn 1994, is open to adults with a degree or appropriate experience of teaching in post-compulsory education. The programme comprises three term-length courses, each of which is taught through five day schools. We adopted the day school approach partly to attract adult educators from beyond Sussex and because this model seemed to fit more easily into the hectic personal and working lives of many adult educators, but also because the full days provided time for intensive reflection and intimate group work. We provide short 'learning packs' of readings and ideas for each day school, and ask participants to maintain a course journal alongside their readings and project work (see Lukinsky, 1990).

The Autumn term course, 'Autobiographical Approaches to Lifelong Learning', focuses on the learning life histories of course participants. In two introductory day schools participants present short oral accounts of aspects of their learning life histories, which they then develop through reflective writing. Subsequent day schools use this autobiographical material and relevant literature to explore a range of interrelated issues such as the links between life stories, narrative, identity and learning; the interface between individuals and society in learning and education; life history approaches to teaching and learning; and the learning life histories of adult educators.

In the Spring term course, 'Biographical Approaches to Lifelong Learning', we use the use the written and oral life histories of British adult learners in the 19th and 20th centuries as a resource to explore education and learning at different times and in different contexts, enabling comparative contextualisation of participants' experiences and consideration of more general issues. Using autobiographical, historical and theoretical writings we focus on key themes which have shaped different experiences of learning and education - class, gender, race and ethnicity, dis/ability - while also interrogating the construction, meaning and lived experience of such categories.

In the Summer term course participants undertake an 'Adult Learning and Life Histories Research Project', guided by day schools, readings about life history research methods, individual supervision sessions and research support groups. Though initially developed as a one year course, we are now developing a second year by dissertation towards an MA in Education (Life Histories and Learning).

For each of the three courses Mary Stuart and I decided to adopt a team teaching approach, partly because we anticipated that the approach would raise personal and pedagogical issues which would require mutual support, and partly because we wanted to work together developing an innovative programme as we went along. By contrast with Pierre Dominice, we agreed that during the course we would explore our own learning life histories, in order to give us a better understanding of the autobiographical experience of the course and the issues it posed, and so that we could participate more fully in group activities. We determined that our role would be as facilitators as much as teachers, providing a learning structure which would draw upon the breadth of participants' experience and understanding, while also introducing the life histories approach and relevant issues about learning and education. Among the teaching methods we use on the day schools are pair and small group work with feedback focused on key issues, workshop activities, facilitated discussions and mini-lectures. We emphasise that the day schools are intended to support a wider learning based on readings, independent research and writing, personal memory work and practical application in other teaching and learning contexts. The teaching approaches and learning strategies are discussed and negotiated with participants, and that discussion - for example about the tensions between the facilitators' input, group work and self-directed study - is part of the learning about adult education.

Each of the courses is assessed through written project work, with the length and depth of the writing increasing each term. Assessment poses particular problems for autobiographical approaches to teaching and learning (see Quicke, 1988), but we believe that the research and writing is a valuable, indeed essential, part of the learning process, and provide detailed feedback and peer group discussion about non-assessed drafts to facilitate that process.

The cohort of fifteen participants which commenced the course in October 1994 are mainly women and typically in their thirties or forties. Most of them have extensive experience as adult educators in a variety of contexts, though a few are adult returners to higher education whose own experience as mature students has sparked an interest in adult education. In choosing the course all expressed an interest in its auto/biographical approach, and a willingness to explore the issues and tensions it would invoke at a personal and pegagogical level.

In the first day school we agreed on a set of course ground rules, including individual and collective responsibility for timekeeping, mutual respect, sharing the time and space, confidentiality and individual responsibility for what would be brought to the group. Such ground rules are common in many adult education groups, but their agreement and maintenance is particularly important for the safe and effective use of autobiographical material. Even with the ground rules there have been significant tensions, some of which became damaging for individuals and the group, while others have served as a self-conscious resource for learning about selves, group dynamics and issues in adult learning and education.

The problem of 'theory'

One issue which emerged in the first months of the course was a resistance to theory, and to theorising personal experience (see also Davis, 1994). In part this was a wariness of complex and often jargonistic models of self and society. To a certain extent we allayed that not uncommon fear by arguing that theories are particular ways of seeing and knowing the world, by exploring their constructed and contested nature, and by showing how we all use 'theory' to make sense of everyday experience. One participant acknowledged these ideas in a course reflection form after the first term:

> A memorable point on the course was Mary saying earnestly that 'people feel passionately about theories' because of personal meaningfulness. That was a bit of a turning point for me I feel in my whole attitude to academic 'stuff'. It made me realise that I could bring my emotional self into the world of the intellect, concepts and theories.

Theory posed particular concerns in relation to autobiographical work. While participants with more conventional academic backgrounds initially struggled to move from academic to autobiographical reflections, others relished the autobiographical opportunity. A certain amount of unburdening of memories was often wanted and perhaps required before the commencement of more rigorous analysis and explanation. Even then there was resistance to theories and models which seemed to stamp conformity on complex, multi-faceted and contradictory life experiences, and some participants had particular problems when they had to 'pin down' thoughts about their learning life histories in writing. One resolution of this issue was to show how this concern is common to all life history researchers who struggle to connect individual life histories to social structures and explanations. We pointed to examples in the research literature which use multi-faceted and contradictory life experiences to develop illuminative and original understandings (see Norquay, 1990).

Autobiographical risk

New learning can often be a process of uncomfortable or painful self-discovery as accepted understandings and identities are challenged by new ways of knowing. The use of participant autobiographies makes such tensions explicit, and even biographical work on other adult learners' life histories often sparks off difficult associations and memories, as we discovered in the second term. Sue Middleton argues that students should not be required to be autobiographical and warns of the dangers of 'pedagogical voyeurism' (Middleton, 1993). We took that risk on the basis that adults joined the course in full knowledge of its auto/biographical approach, that participants would have complete control over what they decided to disclose to the group, and that their course journals would be entirely private.

Of course personal and group dynamics are never straightforward, and individuals cannot always predict or contain the issues that emerge from life history work. One participant who had joined the course hoping to explore issues about education and disability found that s/he was not able to contain or deal with memories and feelings evoked through autobiographical work, and was not ready to interrogate that experience. Confusion and pain affected course work and spilled out into other aspects of her/his life, and s/he decided to withdraw from the course. This episode reminded us of the importance of taking care in life history work. There needs to be appropriate support for participants from facilitators, from within the group and from external student counselling services (demands on student counselling make this a limited option) Members of a teaching team dealing with issues evoked by the autobiographical work of participants and themselves also need quality support, and Mary and I soon realised that joint teaching was essential. The episode also demonstrated that although in practice involvement on such a course can slip between the blurred boundaries of learning and therapy, we need to be quite clear about the limitations of the educational context, and that teachers are not therapists.

Autobiography and group dynamics

Autobiographical issues also emerged in less direct ways but with significant impacts on group dynamics. In the second term small group and pair work became counterproductive and even destructive, as some participants dominated the groups with issues from their own life stories, or resisted the expectation to draw general observations out of diverse autobiographical material. Difficulties in group dynamics were partly due to the participants' very different expertise in educational group work. They were also influenced by the shift in the second term to the exploration of other people's learning life histories and of the explanatory models offered by the literature. Course members were still working through the implications of autobiographical work initiated in the preceding term, and some were not ready to move forward. Participants at different stages on their course learning cycles projected their own transitional anxieties onto fellow students and facilitators, and in some cases remained relatively unaware of the impact they were having. Other course members were hurt or angered by the obstruction of their learning and commented on the process in course reflection forms:

I feel we are sliding from being a creative group to being a destructive one ... due to the personal agendas of a few people .... Tutors need to be up front about what is annoying them ... and we students need to own / acknowledge our feelings.

The episode highlights the difficulty of balancing autobiographical and conceptual work, and individual and collective needs, in life history approaches to teaching. Towards the end of the second term Mary and I recognised that the balance was not working, and with the advice and support of participants began to resolve some of the concerns by offering more focused discussion topics and activities for group work. Through reflections on the group work problems, some students learnt about relationships between learning cycles, life history work and group dynamics in adult education.

Moving forward

The tensions and issues evoked by our life histories approach were not always or necessarily a problem. The course reflection forms which participants complete after each term are intended to be used - alongside their course journal and group discussions - to reflect upon personal learning on the course (while also providing invaluable feedback on teaching and learning approaches). We introduce the form with a wonderful quote from Aitchison and Graham (in Boud, et al, 1993): 'we do not learn from experience. Experience has to be arrested, examined, analysed, considered and negotiated in order to shift it to knowledge.' As one course member commented about the form, 'it's (just) another learning life history!'

Participants' comments after the first term show how their learning cycles on the programme included trepidation, turmoil, excitement and insight as they tried out new ideas and made connections with their own learning life histories and about issues in education and lifelong learning:

At first I felt unsure what I had let myself in for! I couldn't quite find the texts to read that allowed me access to any new ideas, and I also felt somewhat threatened by the process of autobiography. However, having forced myself into writing and leaving it alone for a few weeks I began to see & understand links, themes that weren't there even in the middle of the module - what had happened? - I'd found people to read who offered new approaches & interpretations of the experiences / memories I had been drawing upon. I had also organized myself, allocated time for reading and reflecting & had rediscovered academic study as a student rather than a tutor, also as an adult. [...] I feel very excited about the new ideas or new ways of analysing old ideas that I'm discovering - I want someone to pay me to sit and read!

Several note how looking at issues in their own learning life histories has had practical implications for their work as teachers as well as learners:

A major change has occurred in the way I now approach the teaching of study skills - I've been there recently and I know how difficult it is!

The reading I have done has helped me on a professional level and I have been able to integrate elements of the course into my teaching, particularly in encouraging my students to consider aspects of their own learning.

Others note how course learning has not only helped them make more positive sense of prior educational experiences, but has impacted upon other aspects of their lives:

Education theory has been dead useful in helping me to understand how my education was more a matter of the imposition of the ideas of others rather than of the development of individual potential. This has also helped me to have a more in depth understanding of the way my children are taught.

Future reflections

Our experience in the first two terms of the programme has highlighted many other issues which we are beginning to explore. Four course members have written about the problems and possibilities in using autobiography for assessment in an academic context (Hargreaves, et al, 1995 - we have adopted the term 'academic story' for this writing). There are major debates within the course and in the life history literature about the validity and value of life history research. I am also concerned that in our focus on learners' life histories we don't neglect analysis of educational structures, institutions and policy, and unwittingly support voluntarism and educational cutbacks. Yet the 'academic stories' of course participants - about the deep and lasting impact of the 11-plus; about labelling, shame and esteem in schooling; about the postwar interclass generated by an educationally mobile working class; about the role of significant others - have certainly enriched my understanding of the experience and meaning of education in 20th century Britain.

Finally, the most exciting aspect of my learning in this course has been a recognition that there are exciting connections which we have barely begun to make between educationalists who write about experience, reflexivity, learning and personal development (see Boud, et al, 1993), and oral historians and other life history researchers who write about the ways people use and construct meaningful stories about their past and present experiences in order to make sense of their lives and shape them in new ways. Learning and life history work promises rewarding future reflections.

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Telling the story of the self / deconstructing the self of the story

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The theme of this conference is 'celebration' and nothing perhaps has been more celebrated in adult education than 'experience'. From andragogy to contemporary forms of critical and feminist pedagogy 'experience' figures as a key organising concept in theorising, practice and research. There are powerful assumptions that knowledge emerges from the experiences of the self and that these experiences are a valuable pedagogic resource which can be harnessed to the project of learning and self-development. In this paper, I examine the ways in which certain current understandings of the place and significance of autobiographical approaches have been used to re-configure, re-create and re-vitalise these assumptions.

Self, time and presence

Autobiography (or telling the story of the self) has achieved considerable prominence in pedagogy and educational research. It appears ideally suited to revealing experience-based learning and in tracking the development of the self as learner. It has been deployed in both adaptationist and transformative pedagogical practices. I want to argue however that the autobiographical approach is actually much more complex in its message and equivocal in its effects than conventional educational thinking assumes. Its use raises critical questions about education's modernist assumptions concerning the self, experience and the developmental process.

Telling the story of the self always assumes a certain kind of subject - the 'self of the story' - a self dominantly invested in a humanistic story of a sovereign, unified, rational subject - the source of knowledge and representation. It is enveloped in a story of mastery telling a masterful story- of the problems of life overcome, of the progressive accumulation of knowledge and self-realisation. The autobiographical subject makes himself (and more often than not it has been a 'him') an object of examination, understanding its life through modernist notions of ego development, self-assertion and individual accomplishment. In this story there is meaning to be discovered, unveiled in the telling, the assumption being that the meaning of experiences (the meeting, confronting, passing through and making sense of the events of a life) are masterable and univocal. The self of the story is conceived as a life embarked on a journey to discover the 'real me'.

Autobiography then becomes a process of writing the self, of telling the story of the self through a written text and of writing the text through a culturally encoded meta-story. It works through a metaphysics of presence (Derrida, 1976), a recounting of a fixed preserved summonable past (the past made present) by a self who is a real concrete subject and who gives meaning to its life, a meaning which is concretely present (the self as presence) - both the past and the self being representable, knowable and communicable directly and transparently. Autobiography, then, assume a centred time and a centred self.

This central assumption that a life 'as it really is' can be captured and represented in a text has been increasingly questioned. It is now becoming accepted that an autobiography is not immediately referential of a life but is instead a work of artifice or fabrication that involves reconstructing the self through writing the self. Changing and shifting identity is 'fixed' and anchored by the act of writing. In the poststructuralist story the emphasis is on writing, the production of text. Life itself is conceived as a social text, a fictional narrative production. How it is produced, the processes of textual production, becomes critical with form and content mutually determining (Denzin, 1989). For example, to tell the story of the self in terms of a journey of discovery is not simply to reflect (on) and accurately depict one's life and by doing so reveal its meanings but rather to tell a story through a particular kind of modernist discourse - one which provides a structure and a set of pre-defined meanings in the form for example of metaphors (the 'journey') from which the story is constructed. The story has its justification, its point, its interpretive meaning in terms of 'grand narratives' (Lyotard, 1984), especially the narrative of human progress. An individual autobiography becomes a microcosmic reflection of this big universal story.

Autobiographies are mainly read as if they were referential of a life, representations of a prior self, and as if the past appears fixed and entire to the mind. They read as if they are an account of a centred past by a centred self. In a sense it is the very textuality of autobiography that foregrounds 'presence' and conceals textuality. In autobiography's dominant humanistic discourse it is the authorial and authoritative voice - the voice that tells it 'as it is' - which is privileged, re-presenting the past in its unmediated truth and presenting the self in its full, unmediated authenticity. Furthermore, autobiographies are read through the need for a human presence in the writing, which once discovered seems to guarantee both the sincerity and the authenticity of the self of the story. As Graham (1993) points out, when markers of an authentic presence are absent texts appear detached and 'unreal'. He argues that this very sense of spontaneity, reality or human identity is itself, however, partly a matter of textual production, of how the story of the self is told through narrative, plot and character development in such a way that the self becomes the protagonist of her own story and therefore a 'real' subject. But it is also a function of readers with the competence to understand and interpret the significance of certain textual conventions. The autobiographical text is an important artefact of Western culture which requires and indeed assumes readers and interpreters who know the metanarratives and discourses of that culture - who are familiar with self of the story and can identify with it. The story of the self is therefore constructed and understood, or at the very least mediated, through socio-cultural interpretive traditions and rhetorical/ linguistic practices.

Development without progress

Experiences are not only expressed through written texts but also in terms of 'development'. But this in itself is no escape from narrative for 'development' is itself structured through a narrative - of ‘developmentalism’. Moreover, this narrative of human development is very often one which structures autobiographical texts.) We could say that developmentalism is a narrative which enshrines the notion of order into the plot of a life and by doing so makes the world (experiences) ordered (Ricoeur, 1980). Thus 'development' is not a natural given, but created by certain discursive practices- in particular, the discourses of psychology. Development is change storied and presenced in a particular way, for example through psychological discourses centred on universal criteria such as Piagetian stages or life-span phases which at the same time as being universal supposedly reveal an essential truth about individual selves.

It would be easy enough to see any critique of developmentism as simply a denial of change and progress. However, it is not so much a matter of denying change but of questioning the way in which developmentalism presents it as natural, regular and linear, and thus highlighting the effects of developmentalism. Since change is constructed as universal, a norm is created - a powerful norm couched in the language of scientificity - with the consequence that alternatives to this norm are closed off as pathological, marginal, and invisible. Thus this story of human development becomes both totalising and regulative.

Equally, it is difficult to question the notion of 'progress', so embedded is this in our cultural consciousness. Yet what this highlights is that 'progress' is not simply a neutral description of reality but works textually to normalise the multiplicity and diversity of experience gained in different areas of human activity. Again there is a closure but 'progress' also provides an emplotment which satisfies the need to be sure of one's self (a reassuring presence) and of finding an adequate self-referential and heroic description of life-context. It is a culturally sanctioned way of constructing 'depth' in terms of a meaningful life, of influencing and controlling one's life-course and of providing coherence for one's life-story. The medium is time in the shape of history as a directed process and a process with direction. Where we are now, the present, is an end-point and each period or stage is narrated as an inevitable move in this direction, every move orchestrated by a particular dynamic. The narrative is linear and unidirectional where one stage leads to another and where each moment - past, present and future - becomes a presence on a line moving in an upward pre-given direction. In the process, difference is repressed and time suppressed (or centred) in a demand for certainty. The narrative of development, by fixing upon 'progress' as the transcendental signified (or universal meaning) provides certainty and re-assurance but holds still the temporal process of infinite referral and deferral of traces which constitutes a life.

As a universal story, certain patterns of human change become 'natural' or the manifestation of progress. It's oppressive because it does not know itself as a story and thus lacking reflexivity it conceals the workings of power in human activity. The narrative of development forces convergence to the 'same' - first, because difference is either repressed, marginalised or treated as a threatening 'other' and second, because in structuring the world as a knowable sequence it forgets human open-endedness and unfinalisability, the mystery and sheer contingency of a life.

Writing autobiography differently

Postmodern subjects face the problem of producing themselves and giving substance to their lives when the means of narrating the self have lost credibility - when they too become depthless (Wakefield, 1990: 125).

Developmentalism is therefore part of a wider story of the self most commonly found in education and the definitive self of education's story. It emerges very clearly in those pedagogical situations where students are invited to write their autobiography as a means of reflecting on their own learning. As an educator, I am never entirely sure what to make of this. I can see these autobiographies simply as 'authentic' accounts of experience and correspondingly treat them as examples of achieved learning and the raw material for further learning. Yet I am also aware that these stories are immersed in the narrative of development, for example they tend to be characterised by the 'Hollywood effect' of everything working out all right in the end.. They tell a developmental story even as they present their stories as the story of 'how it really is' (and was). I have argued that there is no such 'how it really is' story in an individualistic sense. Although as a self we each have a unique historical horizon, any story of the self is simultaneously in the story of late capitalism, post-colonialism and patriarchy - stories that emplot lives often behind the back of individual consciousness. In the educational encounter, these stories need to be told and we are all familiar with pedagogies designed to enable their telling. But what concerns me is the possibility that as educators we are (implicitly) telling students the story they must tell - and the story, whether it be located in a pedagogy of individual self-realisation or one of personal and collective empowerment, is still emplotted through the narrative of development which educators find virtually impossible to critique as narrative.

Although I have no definite answer to this, part of it may lie in harnessing the full potential of autobiography by thinking about how it might be written differently and how difference might be presented in the writing. Inevitably this thinking and writing differently will raise, in their full force, the questions posed earlier. As McRobbie (1994) argues the notion of the 'real me' points to the fictive unity of the self which yet once dislodged poses troubling questions of identity. Perhaps we just need to get used to living with fragmentation, and rather than endlessly searching for it, accept that the self will be invented and re-invented.

Who knows, this might even prove pleasurable, albeit troublingly so? Here, Baudrillard's texts, America (1989) and Cool Memories (1990), provide some resonances. The former is a journal of personal experiences travelling across the USA, the latter a memoir of his reactions to this and to other contemporary events. Interestingly both are accounts of a journey - the powerful structuring metaphor in the narrative of development. Baudrillard subverts this narrative because his journeys are aim-less and non-developmental, they have no point other than themselves - as he says (Baudrillard, 1990, 168) 'the further you travel the more clearly you realise that the journey is all that matters'. In America the experience of travel becomes an end in itself, leading nowhere in particular either spatially or in terms of maturity or self-knowledge. Experience is not reified, it is not subjected to reflection and located in a fixed past to be recalled but rather presented as contingent and unfinished, leading to more experience rather than knowledge. In refusing to link experience with knowledge, Baudrillard undermines the notion that underneath the seeming incoherence and disorder of experience there is a deep meaning which once found will enable the coherence and order to be imposed that is necessary for knowledge. Instead he celebrates the pleasurable qualities of the open-ness of experience.

Through his reflexive and non-sequential style of writing Baudrillard reflects the world he is describing - a world of hyper-reality where reality and sign become one and where the social is endlessly constructed and simulated. Rather than denting the 'real' he highlights the representational problematic. This 'message' is presented allusively, through a depthless autobiography, telling the story of a depthless world. We may not agree with it, we may even be offended and want to tell a different story - but at least we know that Baudrillard is telling a story and that it is his story. At the least, we can get pleasure out of it - and perhaps resonances too which might help us tell our own story.

Fischer (1986, 198) argues that 'the modalities of veracity in our age can no longer (if they ever could be) be limited to the conventions of realism'. This needs to be taken account of even if we do not share Baudrillard's vision of the depthless self in a depthless society. At the very least, it raises important problems of configuring experience in a mode of autobiographical writing which sits uneasily with the contemporary condition of postmodernity. Postmodernity suggests the need to go beyond single dominant narratives into other modes of writing based on collage or montage, given that no one narrative, such as the narrative of progress, can account for the diversity and multiplicity of human experience. Collage or montage are possible means of writing autobiography differently, in a decentred way, by decentring the self and time. By subverting the narrative convention of linear progression, utopian time and the discovery/recovery of self a space is created that allows a foregrounding of gaps, exclusions, repositionings, and repressions (Kehily, 1995).

It is significant to note in this connection that marginalised groups have always questioned linear progression and replaced it with texts which interweave tension and contradiction. This alerts us to the fact that the centred autobiography although it presents itself as a universal and unproblematic form can actually be read historically as representing and defining white males, where autobiography presents a unitary essentialist self progressing through life with a clear set of aims and ambitions. White male experience, usually relating to professional activities, totalises and normalises all human experience. The identity created by the act of writing is freed from ambiguity and contradiction, shaped by and for the public domain. The female autobiography as Buss (1993: 7) points out is written in a style that has 'no investment in creating a cohesive self over time' and that exploits 'difference and change over sameness and identity'. The same could be said for autobiographies of members of ethnic minority groups, which make a point of drawing attention to their 'linguistic and fictive nature, of using the narrator as an inscribed figure within the text..., of encouraging the reader to self-consciously participate in the production of meaning' (Fischer, 1986: 232)

Educators have tended, in the main, to locate themselves in humanistic discourse regardless of whether their pedagogical intentions have been adaptationist or transformative. Even those who use autobiography as a critical resource have construed it in a modernist narrative that constructs self and time as presence. What I argue for instead is a re-writing of the story of the self which deconstructs the dominant self of the story. As I have also pointed out, this would not be a venture ploughing unknown territory - other's stories, stories of the 'other', are already there.

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Two cheers for special needs provision in adult education

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Introduction

Our theme is the celebrating of adult education. In the area of special needs there is indeed some justification for celebration.

Shortly after the first SCUTREA conference the Russell Report (DES, 1973) in its plan for the development of adult education highlighted three groups of disadvantaged adults who it considered were at that time relatively untouched by adult education. One was the group of disabled people.

Consider the situation then. Remember that up to 1970 people with severe learning difficulties (hereafter SLDs) were considered "ineducable" and were excluded totally even from the school system let alone from adult education. In that year the Education (Handicapped Children) Act transferred responsibility for children with SLDs from Health to Education.

Thus the year of our first conference was also coincidentally a milestone in the education of people with disabilities. At that time the education of pupils with other disabilities was restricted largely to segregated schools. The education of adults with such other disabilities was very sparse. Outside the capital it was largely restricted to vocational training and/or rehabilitation as at St Loye's College, Exeter.

Developments

Here I want initially simply to survey some of the developments in this area of education over the quarter century. To provide detail of these changes, among other examples I'll consider the situation at Park Lane college in Leeds. I co-authored an article on special needs education there in the early 70s (Sanders & Watson, 1975) and that will provide a useful contrast for the present situation.

The first intake specifically of disabled students was in Sept. 1971 when the Leeds authority took a positive view of the 1970 Education of Handicapped Children Act
and approved the setting up of an FE course for students with SLDs. This was possibly the first such FE course in the country. It involved 11 students with SLDs. There was no specific provision for people with other disabilities in the college at that time.

At about that time other pioneering courses were taking place elsewhere, for example at Nottingham (Hutchinson & Clegg, 1975).

The Russell committee reported from its nation-wide survey (assuming the incidence of disability was about the same as it is now) that only about 3 out of every 1000 disabled people joined adult education classes. That figure itself however is somewhat misleading. The majority of enrolments were in the greater London area. In other parts of the country the picture was bleaker, e.g. in Yorkshire/Humberside the enrolment of disabled students was less that 1 per 1000 of the disabled population.

Growth in this area can be seen by comparing the current situation with the one just described. Now Park Lane college has some 400 students with disabilities, including about 150 with SLDs.

There has also been a growth nationally. Even by 1987 SKILL reported from their survey that there were 43,500 students with disabilities in the FE sector, i.e. about 7 per 1000 of the disabled population (DES, 1987).

In addition to this increase in numbers there have been changes over the quarter century in the philosophy of this area of education. One major improvement has been the development of integration. Recall that in 1970 the typical school-education of students with special needs was segregated from mainstream education. So in 1971 in line with that ethos the SLD course at Park Lane was initially segregated from the main college in an annex. It was not until a decade later with Warnock and the 1981 Act that integration got underway. The Park Lane courses for SLD students are now on the main site.

Another significant change stems from the adult education tenet that students have a right to have a say in their education. This arises from the early work of Rogers (1965) and Knowles (1970). However in special needs education there was the patronising view that tutors knew best what should be in a student's programme. This was particularly so in the education of people with SLDs. Indeed this was still found in a recent survey in the Leeds area (Jagger, 1990). This is however now hopefully changing (Dee, 1988; Sutcliffe, 1990). A related move in general education involves students in the assessment of their progress (National Curriculum). This also is now taking place to a limited extent in adult special education (Dee, 1988).

Different people ascribe different aims and objectives to adult education. These range from ...

the personal development of the individual,
through instrumental aims, such as vocational education,
through to social change of groups of people.

The aims of education for disabled students generally are the same as for all students, plus extra emphasis often being given to the development of independence and self-confidence. The aims of education of student with SLDs however are not exactly the same as those for other students because these students will not obtain jobs in the open employment market. Early in the century they were trained to work in sheltered workshops etc. so that "society might be spared at least part of the cost of their maintenance" (Report of the Mental Defective Committee, 1927). In the 1970s it was suggested that Adult Training Centres (ATCs), where many people with SLDs spend a lot of their time, should be changed to Social Education Centres (SECs); that is, there should be a change from mundane occupational work to personal and social education. The response to this has been patchy: in some places we have ATCs and in some places SECs.

In FE, as at Park Lane, the aim has been typically social and general development. Now however we have a change in philosophy imposed upon us by the government with its emphasis upon vocational education via schedule 2 of the FHE Act. This affects the whole of education. It affects particularly people with SLDs. Some courses for students with SLDs have nonschedule 2 funding but this is being reduced and in many places people fear that such classes will be reduced or even vanish.

Turning to more practical issues, there have been important changes in teaching method brought about by developments in I.T. Consider but a few examples. Previously people who could not speak had to rely on simple communication boards. Now there are complex electronic devices which are controlled e.g. by touch which enable the student to produce messages on miniscreens or even via a voice synthesiser. For blind people there is the Kurzweil reading machine and its derivatives which can "read" print i.e. translate a printed statement into the spoken word. More generally the whole area of computer assisted learning and for example the Open University offers considerable opportunities. Indeed the OU has more students with disabilities than all other HE institutions together (Child, 1989).

Some problems

There are however some problems in the education of adults with special needs. Some of these can be highlighted by comparing the situation in adult education with that in child education (Watson, 1995).

Terminology

Firstly there are problems of terminology. To understand this we need briefly to review the terminology in child education. The concept "Special educational need" (hereafter SEN) is derived from the 1981 Education Act and ultimately from the Warnock Report. That report suggested replacing the term 'handicap' which was seen as referring to an attribute of the person, with the expression SEN, which was seen as attributing the student's problems to an interaction of a feature of the student with aspects of the student's environment. Thus a child has an SEN if he/she has a learning difficulty (hereafter LD) which calls for special educational provision. A child with a severe and persistent SEN will be provided with a Statement of SEN. Thus in schools there are pupils with SENs with Statements and pupils with SENs without statements. In addition the Warnock report suggested among other things, as a practical consequence of the new concepts, getting rid of the distinction between remedial education and special education and calling it all special needs education and also as noted above, that there should be as much integration of this special needs education into normal schools as possible.

After this side glance at child education, what about the legal terminology in adult education? The FHE Act defines LD in the same way as the 1981 children's Act does, but it does not define or use the term special educational provision. Similarly the FHE Act does not define or use the expression 'special educational need'. Thus there is a significant change in terminology when we move from the legislation of child-education to that of adult education.The term SEN has no legal status in adult education. Of course the term SEN or more generally 'special needs' is used in discussion and practice in adult education. But in adult education it usually refers to the needs of people with LDs or disabilities. It does not mean the same thing in adult education as it does in child education. In particular it has a very much restricted denotation. There are practical implications of this.

Whereas in child education, what used to be called remedial education has been merged with special education, in adult education we have both special education and basic skills education which are seen as separate disciplines and undertaken by different teams of tutors (ALBSU, 1992).

Identification and assessment procedures.

As a consequence to the terminology differences there are differences between child and adult education in practices concerning identification and assessment of students with SENs. In child education the identification and assessment of pupils with SENs, particularly those requiring a Statement of SEN, is prescribed in detail in the Code of Practice of the 1993 Education Act. The procedure may involve a series of up to 5 stages and a wide range of personnel. These include personnel from outside the child's school, to increase the comparability of standards across different schools. Turning to adult education there are different identification and different assessment procedures.

Firstly concerning identification, in school education one tries to identify all pupils with any of a wide range of special educational needs. In adult special needs education one tries to assess the special needs only of students with disabilities (including SLDs). (This is not to say that in adult education some tutors are not concerned with needs of, for example, educationally disadvantaged students but this is not usually seen as the work of Special Needs tutors).

Secondly with regard to procedures, in adult education there is no Code of Practice. Concerning general assessment practices a government spokesman said "there is no such requirement (for a specific procedure), a more flexible procedure is required at this stage of life". This seems to suggest that institutions can use whatever procedure they like and that the procedures of one institution need have no relation to those of another. This could lead to unequal distribution of resources and unfairness.

In FE/HE etc. assessment of which students have SENs and what the SENs are often involves a very simple procedure. The Special Needs Co-ordinator firstly ascertains which students have disabilities, from initial application forms and/or tutor returns at the start of term. Of course concerning the latter a student may say that he/she does not wish to be seen as having a disability and as having a special need. Some students make this choice. However when a student with a disability is identified and agrees to accept special help the co-ordinator then determines what support is needed in discussion with the student. There is nothing like the 5 stages which occur in school education and importantly there is usually no involvement of outside personnel. That is there is no mechanism to ensure comparability of standards between different establishments. Indeed this lack of an independent and formalised assessment procedure is one of the least satisfactory aspects of the FHE Act (Dryden, 1994).

There are some important facts concerning the identifying of students with SENs. While about 3% of children are disabled, on average 14% of adults are disabled (Martin et al, 1988). Incidence is however significantly related to age, thus while about 3% of 20 year olds are disabled, about 40 % of 70 year olds are. From this we note importantly that 3/4 of adults with disabilities were able-bodied as children. This points to a major need for rehabilitation.

Location and personnel.

A major difference between child and adult education is related to Knowles' assumption that for a child education is largely for future life, while adult education is often to provide help to the student for current problems. As was just noted a major task concerning disability is rehabilitation - there is often a major education component in this. There is often in fact insufficient provision of rehabilitation (Bruce et al, 1991). More often than not the teaching involved in rehabilitation is undertaken outside the education service, by e.g. social service or health personnel. Is this because the education services have failed to respond to a need here? Or is it because the other services have excluded education? To an extent it is the latter: In the area of Community Care, the official viewpoint is that education has no role. (Lavender et al, 1992).

Looking forward

Currently the FEFC has set up the Tomlinson Committee "to review FE for students with disabilities and /or LDs". This will be considering some of the above problems (Nash, 1994). Consider some possibilities:

Concerning terminology it is likely that adult education will retain the usage of the terms Disabilities and LDs and reject the term SEN for logical reasons. This could have a "spill over" effect in thinking in child education. Special needs education and basic education should be brought closer together. It seems odd for example that one set of tutors should be teaching, say, basic reading skills to educationally disadvantages students, and another set of tutors teach these skills to people with MLDs. Nevertheless although there should be more co-operation and collaboration, I consider that in adult education, tutors should not aim to be the jack of all trades that some school special needs teachers sometimes aspire to be.

With regard to assessment there is need for the involvement of outside personnel to increase the comparability of standards, perhaps this might be arranged via development of PACT teams.

There is under-representation of disabled students, particularly in HE. There are many reasons for this. These include some socially devised barriers which could at least in part be removed by legislation. Unfortunately attempts to move in this direction were defeated in parliament last year.

There is need for more collaboration of education with social services and health personnel in community care work and rehabilitation. There needs to be more education (i.e. teaching methodology) in the training of social service and health personnel.

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Re-visioning the self

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There are people who have to pay for the smallest things in life with their very substance and their spinal chord...(Alphone Daudet, Lettres de Mon Moulin)

Introduction

This paper explores the concept of self in late modernity and its importance to adult education. There is unease about using the term, partly reflecting the influence of postmodernist and post-structuralist thinkers in the work of a number of adult educators and feminists. The self within the dominant tradition of Western epistemology is seen to derive from essentialist, individualistic, rationalistic and unitary assumptions. Kant, for example, considered the self to be independent of experience or society: it was not phenomenal, nor a product of time and chance.

Wendy Hollway (1989), from a feminist perspective, has challenged the rigid notion of a unitary, pre-existing, transcendental self, outside history and experience. She celebrates instead the idea of multiple and contradictory selves, and a subjectivity open to varying expression in different situations. These selves are constructed, and reconstructed, in discourse and social practices: they are dynamic and multi-dimensional, consisting of both conscious and unconscious, emotional and rationalistic elements.

For radical adult educators the dissolution or deconstruction of the self appears to offer huge potential prizes: identities which are socially and/or linguistically constructed are open to reconstruction in new and radical ways. Nothing is fixed and given as the self dissolves. It is time to celebrate the opportunities of a fragmented but also highly malleable subjectivity. Selves, given sufficient critical awareness, can be transformed as texts are rewritten. Post-structuralism is a powerful influence in these perspectives: there is little or nothing beyond text. For Foucault, Derrida and Rorty there is no depth: there is nothing which is not a product of the practice and discourses, often contradictory, in which we figuratively find ourselves (Flax, 1990).

There is much in these arguments: stories, for instance, may constitute as well as represent reality (West, 1995). However, there may be a danger of discarding the baby of self with the bathwater of essentialism and structuralism. It is possible to regard subjectivity as largely socially constituted without abandoning the idea of self altogether. Indeed, a dynamic struggle for selfhood - for some coherence, integrity, authenticity, inner security and integration (of different parts, conscious and unconscious, strengths and weaknesses) - may be a survival imperative in the destabilising conditions of late modernity.

Fragmentation and late modernity

Late modernity seems to be characterised by constant change and dislocation, alongside new opportunities for individuals to experiment with their identities. Stephen Frosh argues that modern states of mind are forged in cultural instability of a 'cataclysmic kind' (Frosh, 1991). To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us transformation while at the same time, to quote Marx, 'all that is solid melts into air.' Giddens (1991) suggests that individuals have greater choice over lifestyles as tradition breaks down. Yet, as old certainties disintegrate, people need coherence and meaning to survive and prosper. Giddens believes that a 'reflexive project of the self', consisting of sustaining a coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narrative, becomes necessary for survival. This raises the question of precisely what is meant by such a project and the preconditions for its success.

I want to argue that a capacity to transcend constant change requires degrees of psychological security and cohesion to enable individuals to remain open to experience rather than being paralysed by it which, paradoxically, depends, in psychological terms, on others and their capacity to provide emotional support. These were central themes in the stories of some adult learners in a longitudinal study of 30 Access students. They were interviewed, in depth and at length, over a period of three years. Conversations explored experiences at work, in personal relationships, in communities, in childhood, in education and in the most intimate experiences of self. I wanted to understand how some individuals find the means to transcend crisis and dislocation, to reconstruct a life, often in radically different ways.

The stories involved change of different but interconnected kinds: in the collapse of traditional forms of male employment, redundancy, divorce, children leaving home, renegotiating relationships between men and women. Many of the students were from the Medway Towns and Thanet in Kent which have experienced major economic and social dislocations. The research methodology - participatory, dialogical and empathic - encouraged the students to explore and interpret their life stories over time. A number of students talked of low self-esteem from childhood and their struggles to cope from a fragile base. Yet how, through education and the help of other people, they were discovering a sense of agency and authenticity, a distinct self, for the first time in their lives.

False and truer selves

Two 'telling' (in the sense that they illuminate complex issues) case studies illustrate how a struggle for self may lie at the heart of transformational learning in contexts of fragmentation. The processes of reparation and rebuilding can be theorised using relational psychoanalysis which conceives subjectivity in constructivist and contingent terms. Brenda and Paul had damaged, distressing childhoods in which they could never feel secure, where life was spent appeasing others. There was little or no emotional space, unconditional regard or encouragement to take risks and be. Those with fragile senses of self may have something to teach others who might take inner stability and coherence for granted in their theoretical speculations.

Brenda, is a woman in her early 50s with a disintegrating marriage and children leaving home. She related her present crisis of identity to her childhood experiences. She talked of feelings of uselessness and defensiveness being rooted in early times. She mentioned feeling fragile at the core, of how early relationships had left her like this, with low self esteem. The fragility, in a context of personal crisis, prompted her to seek help, (initially via therapy), and in the process to revisit some of the pain and emptiness of her childhood and her present situation.

Brenda likened her inner most self to a house built on sand:

'House' is quite an interesting metaphor.

....I don't know why I use house - it's the weight of the house and the sand, because the sand was all moving and as a child, you didn't know where you were. I would come home and find my father had left home, they had had a violent quarrel, or I would come home and find my mother very ill, probably as a consequence. She used to get the most appalling migraines, and I was in the position where I would have to look after her. Another time I would arrive home and find the house completely empty and my mother had gone into hospital and my father had pushed off with his girlfriend and nobody told me....It was just the fear of being alone and that fear is still there a little bit, this sense of isolation....My mother was very protective with me and over anxious. Always worrying about things, I could never ever find my own space, my own freedom because she was always over anxious....Because there has been a lot of co-dependency there with my mother and I needed to unhook myself from that....

It goes back I think to when I used to look after her when she was very sick, cooking and washing her down, when I was very young. There was a bond formed through that and perhaps it wasn't a healthy bond, letting a child be free, and there was that co-dependency from the point of view of 'I shouldn't do that if I was you' and 'I shouldn't do that' and 'be careful, you'll fall' and usually I did! I was caught climbing trees when I was twelve and was severely punished, and it wasn't a particularly high tree, I only went up to where the branches begin to break out from the trunk. There was quite a lot of enforced punishment there, and so in a way I became co-dependent on them because I felt I lacked confidence to venture in any risk taking. So again the Access course for me is risk taking, and I am enjoying it...Just to rebuild the house a little bit -instead of it being on sand, I am aiming to get that house a little bit on rock. So in turn that would make me feel my own person, I would really discover who I am and not who other people want me to be.

There was little room for risk taking and agency in this environment; life was more a matter of holding on and meeting the needs of others (there is a wider gender dimension in the stories too). Brenda felt paralysed as a child, as she has done more recently with her husband. She was a being for others rather than self, someone who performed for, and was abused, by those she sought to appease. In Winnicott's terms a false self seems to have developed, a coping, compliant and defensive self, in order to survive. Over time, he suggests this self may be experienced as empty, inauthentic, without meaning (Winnicott, 1971). As worlds disintegrate, such feelings, and an inability to cope, may increase. But Brenda has survived and progressed. She talked about her daughter and their relationship in her very recent history. The daughter had recently completed an Access course and appears, along with a therapist, to have played a crucial role in enabling Brenda to feel more secure and begin to reconstruct her life. The daughter had fought, successfully, against a life threatening illness, and this strength, and the quality of their relationship, appear to have given Brenda some of the emotional and psychological sustenance she needed for her own struggle. Evidence can be found from the black consciousness and women's movements of how those who struggle against oppression or pain, are seen by others to express elements of personality which may be admired and resonate with similar internal processes of their own. There may be a beneficial, inter-subjective cycle at work: of the externalisation of desire, struggle and re-appropriation of a strengthened self (Frosh, 1991).

Paul, a working class man from the Medway Towns, whose health and business had collapsed in the recession, talked of childhood abuse, of cowering and emptiness:

.... My father was very strict probably too strict....I wouldn't say we were beaten but it probably would have been classed as abuse now. We had no relationship at all.... No, I wasn't confident at all - if anyone asked me a question up to the age of 10 I'd burst into tears. If I ever got cornered the only thing we were taught to do was to fight our way out. It was OK with children my own age but if I was ever confronted by an adult, because I had been so frightened of my dad, ...you cowered down, you had to cower down. I can actually remember at one stage in my life actually turning around, waiting, I just wanted to grow up just so I could fight back....I think it would be fair to say it wasn't a happy childhood....One day my older brother turned on the taps in the bath, which seems quite trivial nowadays and dad come home and we actually got strapped, we got strapped - a two year old boy, my younger brother was two years old and dad strapped him for ...he wanted to know who had done it obviously, we wasn't going to tell who had done it, we all knew it was the older brother and he strapped a 2 year old boy. What's the point!....we were abused...

The psychological impact of such experiences - the sense of personal illegitimacy and insecurity they can bring - was considerable for Paul:

There was a massive... hole there, wasn't there? I'm not complete. You're not a complete person. And this, this was a thing... I want my daughter to look at me and think 'Yea, he's okay, this bloke.' You see I didn't have a childhood as... in, in the... I didn't have the childhood that I want my daughter to have, okay? .... Well, you see I've got this... I have this big hole and yes, I can work, I can work as hard as anyone. But that's not.. that's not it, is it?

Paul felt unable to cope with a disintegrating life. But gradually, with the support and regard of his wife, other students and some of his tutors, the hole was now being filled and a sense of personal legitimacy, self-esteem and confidence established. Paul began to feel like a real person, a distinct and confident self, for the first time in his life.

Constructing a self

According to relational psychoanalytic theory, the self comes to know itself, is constructed, in a context of self-other relationships: with parents, teachers, partners and students, as in the stories above. (This is not to deny that these more intimate relationships are in turn shaped by wider social structures and culture as well as the narratives which sustain them). Brenda and Paul felt paralysed by change and crisis, that they and their lives were disintegrating. They needed responsive, approving mirroring from others - experiences missing from childhood - to create some inner security and confidence from which to take risks and to transcend some of the fragments. Other people were required to reflect back achievements, to provide space in which these could be recognised and understood. As Winnicott (1971) suggests such reflection 'makes the individual to be, to be found'. There is a necessary, inter-subjective struggle for self at the core of these stories.

Jane Flax (1990) suggests that those who celebrate the dissolution and fragmentation of selves are naive. They may be unaware of the basic cohesion within themselves that makes the fragmentation of experiences something other than a slide into defensiveness, or at an extreme, a psychosis in which the self fragments and boundaries between self and others, reality and illusion, disintegrate. The ability to utter new and interesting sentences, the will to resist totalising tendencies, the capacity to fight back despite the awfulness of what has been experienced, all imply some deeper, developing as well as dependent sense of self beyond text.

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Using vocational competences to develop an alternative framework for modern language teaching

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Background

Modern languages have a strong presence in many university departments of adult continuing education. This has not always been the case. When continuing education was funded by the DES it was not permitted to teach modern languages as such. Many departments, however, developed devices like cultural studies (art, literature, history of...) to which language study was regarded as functional. Modern languages as such were only admitted in the session 1989-90, when UFCE took over the funding of continuing education. When the new style courses were introduced they proved very successful. It is obvious that they responded to the personal development needs of the traditional community of students who attended ACE programmes.

There is no doubt that much has been achieved in only six years and that the impact of modern languages has been considerable. About half the departments have appointed a full time member of staff with responsibility for modern languages. And more significant, in a few departments students on language courses represent between one fifth and one fourth of the total FTE count. There is a great variety of courses, from beginners to degree (level 3), from field trips to intensive courses, and there is also a wide range of languages which include minority and community languages.

In Spring 1994 under the auspices of UACE's Working Party on Europe a survey was conducted on the Provision of Modern Languages in University Departments of Adult Continuing Education (Ibarz, 1994). It surveyed 36 universities but did not include London. One of the aims of the Survey was to review the state of foreign language teaching. The type of data gathered is exemplified in Chart 1, which shows the number of departments that teach specific languages and Chart 2, which gives an idea of the type of courses taught.

The other aim of the Survey was to encourage co-operation amongst those responsible for modern languages at a time when we were all confronted with the new challenge of accrediting courses following the announcement from HEFCE in its January circular about future funding. Modern language organiser tend to work in isolation within CE departments and the meetings have been partly an exercise in mutual reassurance and sharing of documents, ideas and experiences. This exchange has helped many of the participants to define the content and length of modules and to devise an assessment scheme which incorporates the views of part-time tutors and is not intimidating to students. The majority of departments have developed modules which combine straight language teaching with an element of cultural studies and by now most departments should have had their courses at Level 1 approved.

There is no doubt that there is much to celebrate. Thousands of students are attending language courses, taught by dedicated teachers, which offer them a good learning environment and the possibility of progression. What has been achieved in a very short period of time is quite remarkable.

Number of CE Departments Teaching Specific Languages

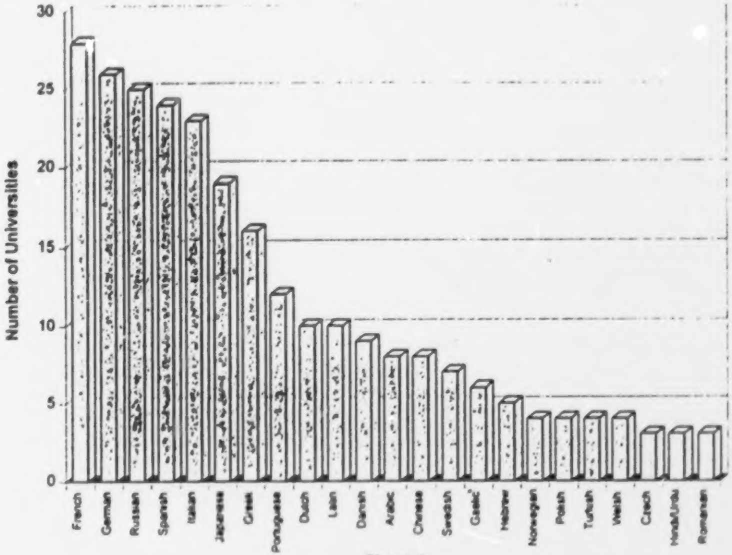


Chart 1

Type of Courses

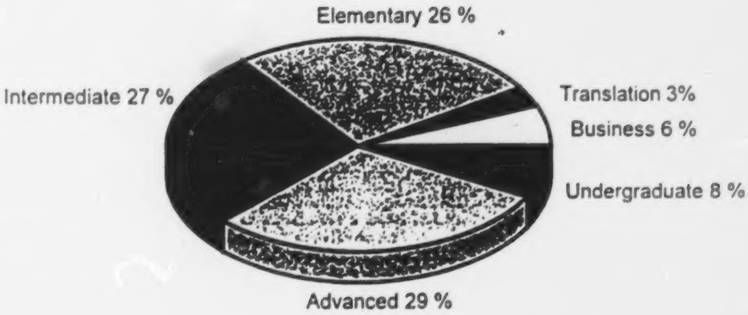


Chart 2

However, we want to propose in the remainder of this paper that the potential for modern language teaching has not yet been fulfilled. As we have seen above, the origin of languages in CE was firmly entrenched in 'cultural' or adult liberal studies and most syllabi continue to be based on that approach, although the proportions might have changed. We believe that there is also a need to consider the role of languages in occupational or professional CE. If we consider the information in Chart 2 we will see that of all the language teaching provision only 9% could be seen as belonging to this category.

Lessons from Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

The increasing pressure towards occupational language courses in CE has been preceded in the much larger world of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and this development within TEFL may provide pointers for the teaching of language in CE. During the 1960's many learners and teachers found the literary approach to language teaching unsatisfactory (McDonough, 1984). This view was reflected in an article titled 'Alternatives to Daffodils' by Strevans (1971) who highlighted the inappropriacy of literature for many learners who needed English for their work or study. The outcome was that English teaching took into account the needs of the various commercial stakeholders and, "...the traditional and leisurely and purpose-free stroll through the landscape of the English language seemed no longer appropriate in the harsher realities of the market place" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:7).

This change of direction towards occupational language teaching did not prove problem free because many of the materials developed did not have a conceptual underpinning. The earliest example of an English language book for the market place is Gabriel Meurier's (1553) 'A Treatise for to Learn to Speak French and English' which was designed for commercial students in Antwerp. Research by these authors revealed 248 books in the area of Business and Management English listed in the 'ELT Handbook 1994/5' (English Language Bookshop, 1994). The reason for this large number of materials is that English has become the lingua franca of industry and commerce. With this large volume of material available it might be assumed that the subject of Management, Business and Commercial English has been thoroughly investigated and documented. However, this would not appear to be the case since a study of many of these books provided little information regarding the theoretical basis on which they were developed nor how the content was chosen.

The need for a theoretical framework

The lack of theoretical underpinnings is supported by Pickett (1989) who contended that little research into Business English had occurred since 1553. Other writers (Johns, 1986; Johnson, 1993; Ellis and Johnson 1994) have expressed similar opinions regarding the lack of research and partly attributed this to linguistic researchers preferring to work in areas of English which are more clearly defined. Johnson (1993:201) suggested that the term 'Business English' is more commonly used by practitioners than by theorists and added that despite the large interest in the subject, "...Business English remains a little researched and ill-defined area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP)?"

This neglect in research into Business English has resulted in few foundations for the practitioner with the consequence that, "...there is little to support course developers beyond their own first-hand experience gained in the field" (Ellis and Johnson, 1994:7). In discussing ESP courses Munby (1978:1) substantiated this view and stated that, "A look at many of the resultant courses and materials prompts the vital question: what system (if any) is being used to arrive at the specification of the English deemed appropriate for different purposes."

Syllabuses and course materials should be developed on the basis of an investigation of the language requirements in that particular area. While recognising that needs analysis was a prerequisite for the design of programmes Hutchinson and Waters (1985:177) stated that,

"Nevertheless it is a simple fact that most published ESP course books, despite the claims implicit in such titles as 'Technical English', are not supported by the thorough examination of the communication realities of their 'specialism' that is necessary."

Following a similar perspective, Munby (1978:3) held the view that in spite of the numerous ESP materials available "... a lot of which is ESP in name only, being poorly disguised General English courses..." Similarly, Robinson (1980:66) stated that a large proportion of general Business English textbooks utilised a general English coursebook design with, "...the only 'business element' being a veneer of vocabulary and a choice of some (not all) of the situations."

The evidence above indicates that there is a strong demand for occupational English and in particular Business English. Nonetheless, in spite of the large volume of materials produced there does not appear to be much research conducted into the subject to provide a conceptual framework for syllabus design. In order to avoid a similar lack of foundations to courses which occurred in TEFL, departments of CE need to develop a conceptual underpinning for their language programmes.

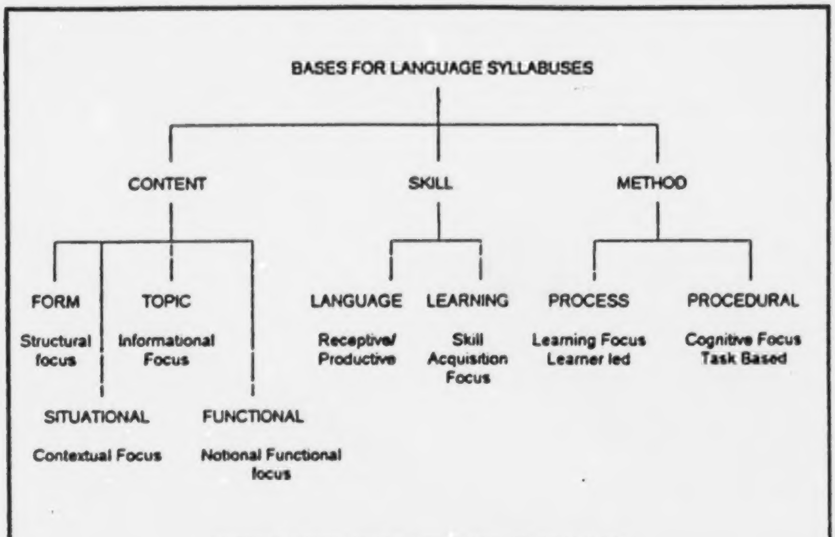
Bases for language syllabus design

The main elements of a syllabus, with the exception of evaluation, are contained within a definition by Yalden (1984:14) who stated that,

"...the syllabus is now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a degree of 'fit' between the needs and aims of the learner (as a social being and as individual) and the activities which will take place in the classroom."

There are a number of bases from which language syllabuses may be designed. White (1988) identified a variety of approaches to constructing a language syllabus as is illustrated below.

Much of the recent work on syllabus design has concentrated on procedurally based and task based syllabuses (Prabhu and Carroll, 1982; Nunan 1989). This is partly due to the demand by students for language activities which not only help them learn but also enable them to practice language relevant to their occupational areas. The difficulty for the language teacher / syllabus designer involves identifying the various tasks involved in that occupation. Therefore, in order to map the tasks involved a needs analysis should be conducted.


BASES FOR LANGUAGE SYLLABUSES
CONTENT
SKILL
METHOD
FORM
Structural focus
TOPIC
Informational Focus
LANGUAGE
Receptive/ Productive
LEARNING
Skill Acquisition Focus
PROCESS
Learning Focus Learner led
PROCEDURAL
Cognitive Focus Task Based
SITUATIONAL
Contextual Focus
FUNCTIONAL
Notional Functional focus

Bases for Language Syllabus Design - White (1988:46)

Syllabus design and needs analysis

The content section of the syllabus is partly determined through a needs analysis which has a central position in the development of language syllabuses. This centrality is endorsed by Richterich (1983:2) who said,

"The identification of language needs thus becomes a sine qua non of all learner-centred teaching and of all learning which is matched to the learner's resources, expectations and interests."

Perhaps one of the major reasons for the limited studies into language in business areas is that a number of skills are required. Robinson (1991:34) suggested that the development of an ESP course was a resultant of the interaction between the course designers, the needs analysis, available materials and other considerations. Not all institutions or organisations have the resources available to support course designers and in many cases this task is left to the teacher (McDonough, 1984). In practical terms the teacher has little time to research the suitability or otherwise of theories or other sources for the development of a syllabus and then design and implement the programme (Walker, 1992).

With respect to the design and delivery of an occupational language syllabus the skills required of a teacher are considerable: an understanding of the target language and its structure; an ability to design courses; a knowledge of the specific occupational area; research skills to conduct a needs analysis and evaluation; and quite obviously teaching ability. For example, the specific subject area of Management English would need a knowledge of theories of management, a linguistic understanding and teaching ability of English; and the skill of course design. This combination of knowledge and skills would not seem to be commonplace among individual teachers or at least if it were the time and resources are often not available with which to apply them.

The role of vocational competences in syllabus design

One solution to the complex demands on the teacher of syllabus design might be to utilise research which has already been conducted into various occupational areas. The type of needs analysis which has been discussed above may be found within the already existing Scottish / National Vocational Qualifications (S/NVQs). There are currently 720 S/NVQ descriptions of the tasks required in occupational areas which have been developed by the 162 Lead Bodies. These cover a wide range of areas such as engineering, transport, health, social care, and communications.

One example of the occupational S/NVQs developed is in the area of management. The Lead Body which developed the competences was the Management Charter Initiative (MCI). The MCI (1990) competences were developed using a functional analysis approach (Fine 1988) which investigated the basic tasks of the managerial activities and mapped out the dimensions. The determining of the management competences involved a significant commitment of resources. Eight research and design projects were commissioned to identify the elements of managerial performance. These were then tested in the workplace with practising managers. This level of research or needs analysis into an occupational area is generally beyond the resources of even large CE or language departments.

The use of job analysis within the language teaching has been applied for some time. Trim (1980) in his Council of Europe work investigated the nature of a unit credit system for adult language learning and considered that an analysis of the language functions used in a work situation might provide the basis for language units. He (1980:27) stated that,

> "The actual structure of each vocational unit / credit cluster would, of course, depend on an accurate job analysis, and should be arrived at in each case by an ad hoc committee containing, say, representatives of the profession concerned (employers and employees), institutions involved in teaching modern languages to that profession, and associations of teachers, in addition to members familiar with the unit / credit system as a whole."

While limitations of the competency movement have been identified (Stewart and Hamlin, 1992) there still remain a number of advantages. A further benefit of S/NVQs is that they use behavioural objectives. Mager (1975) argued that behavioural objectives clarify goals, help with lesson design and organisation; provide data for evaluation; and keep a public record which enables people to know what is expected of them. These uses would appear to ally themselves closely to some of the main components of language syllabuses described by Brumfit (1984).

Conclusion

There is clearly significant scope for the development of language syllabuses built around the S/NVQ competences. The competence descriptors in the form of performance criteria and range statements save time and provide helpful behavioural descriptions. While proposing the use of S/NVQ competence descriptions as a basis for task and procedural language syllabuses the authors recognise that the Language Lead Body (LLB) (1993) has also developed a series of standards for language teaching. These LLB competences should be used in combination with those developed in occupational areas in that they describe the language standards required to operate in that field.

We have described the rationale why S/NVQs might be used as a map of the vocational area which obviates the need for the syllabus designer to conduct a needs analysis of the occupational area. This is where we throw it open to you to contribute your opinions and perhaps find a way through this complex area of syllabus design. In this way we can build upon the successes of CE language teaching and explore new opportunities which respond to the needs of our students for the future.

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NVQs and individuals: barriers and factors influencing take-up

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Introduction

Running and funding successful full-time access and foundation programmes is becoming increasingly problematic. Even in less vocational courses, there is more emphasis on work-based and work-related projects and placements. HE is already beginning to explore the NVQ/SVQ and GNVQ routes as a means of achieving target numbers and broadening access. Moreover, some HE institutions are becoming intimately involved in the process of providing both underpinning knowledge and accreditation for higher-level NVQs. All of these developments require that CE is aware of the barriers which individuals face in pursuing NVQs.

This paper reports on research undertaken on behalf of the Employment Department, which considered what factors influence individuals to take up NVQs, what barriers to take-up exist, and what are the strengths of existing arrangements. The research, involving . semi-structured interviews with 121 individuals, and 40 training providers, advisors and employers, was undertaken between July and December 1994. The information gathered on factors affecting individual take-up of NVQs is substantial and this paper focuses on those which are most significant and relevant for policy recommendations, particularly as they affect the education of adults, under five headings:

- motivation
- knowledge and information
- advice and guidance
- barriers to individuals
- employer, provider and advisor activity

Background

While recent research has provided some indication of the barriers to adoption of NVQs/SVQs, largely from the perspectives of advisors (Crowley-Bainton and Wolf, 1994) and employers (Crowley-Bainton and White, 1993; Callender et al, 1993; Toye and Vigor, 1994), relatively little is known about factors affecting individual take-up. In order to explore the barriers to individuals, interviews were conducted with 123 individuals engaged in pursuing vocational qualifications, both NVQs and VQs, and with 40 employers, training providers (both FE and private), advice and guidance personnel and TEC staff.

Individuals' views were analysed with respect to their knowledge of NVQs, sources and quality of information, advice and guidance, their motivation in pursuing a vocational qualification, and barriers which they encountered. These views are compared and contrasted with the perspectives of employers, providers and advisors. The fieldwork, involving face-to-face interviews with all respondents, was undertaken between August and December 1994 in four TEC areas in England. The issues raised may be equally relevant to SVQs.

The research had two broad objectives:

- to establish in detail the practical arrangements which need to be in place to encourage more individuals successfully to take up NVQs;

- to recommend how actual and perceived deficiencies in the arrangements can best be remedied.

In addressing these aims, complementary research questions considered what factors influence individuals to take up NVQs, what barriers to take-up exist, and what are the strengths of existing arrangements. The research generated substantial new information about factors affecting individual take-up of NVQs.

Motivation

Individuals perceived the main benefits of NVQs in terms of a nationally-recognised qualification which is competence-based and job-related, and employers, providers and advisors recognised the same attractions to individuals. Individuals expected to gain in terms of personal development and job prospects, while employers, providers and advisors emphasised improved job prospects, personal development and job satisfaction. Overall, 67 per cent of NVQ respondents felt that the NVQ had lived up to their expectations, as did 65 per cent of employers, providers and advisors, with providers most convinced and advisors least convinced of this.

Individuals perceived the main drawbacks with NVQs to be the low level of public awareness and doubt over acceptability to employers, while employers, providers and advisors believed drawbacks for individuals were the time and commitment required, lack of support from providers and reservations about the status of NVQs. Employers influence an individual's decision to work towards an NVQ and their choice of NVQ and level. Individuals tend to select an occupational area and then investigate an appropriate qualification to pursue, rather than specifically choose to work towards an NVQ. The majority of individuals successfully pursuing an NVQ at one level intended to continue training at the next level, but some individuals had been unable to pursue NVQs, especially at levels III and above, through lack of availability.

There is a need to build public awareness of NVQs and to develop their acceptability to employers. In marketing NVQs, the benefits of a nationally-recognised qualification which offers personal development and job prospects should be emphasised. Marketing material should be occupationally specific and emphasise 'kitemarking' of competence-based and job-related qualifications. Publicity should be targeted at both individuals and employers in parallel to create 'push' and 'pull' effects. If the marketing initiative is to be successful, the infrastructure needs to be in place to meet expected demand, especially in relation to availability of NVQs at levels III and above.

Knowledge and information

The vast majority of individuals (94 per cent), both NVQ and VQ candidates, had heard of NVQs, but 49 per cent of NVQ candidates were unaware of the status of NVQs and 24 per cent were unaware of their competence-based nature. It was not obvious to individuals where information on NVQs could be obtained, although few experienced difficulty in obtaining information, mainly from FE Colleges, employers and the media. Employers, providers and advisors expected individuals to obtain information from FE Colleges, private providers and employers, and, to a lesser extent, from Careers and the TECs. Employers and providers tended to emphasise their own roles. Some individuals experienced difficulty in understanding information because of the language used and others found that information was not relevant to their needs. Many individuals would have liked more information on the status of NVQs, the time and effort involved and the costs. Candidates pursuing NVQs independently received less information than those working towards NVQs through arrangements with their employer.

These findings suggest that while advertising initiatives via the media have succeeded in raising awareness of NVQs, there is now a need to build on this awareness and develop understanding of the status and competence-based nature of NVQs. Detailed information should be provided on the time and effort involved in pursuing an NVQ, assessment procedures and costs, even where individuals are not paying in order to reinforce the value of NVQs. Literature should be produced in plain English, involve as little technical language as possible and be targeted at specific audiences, occupational sectors and particular delivery initiatives. Leaflets, brochures and information packs should be more widely available for individuals through libraries, benefit offices, Job Centres, Careers Service, other guidance centres and employers. Information sources for NVQs should be established inside organizations, through training or human resource departments.

Advice and guidance

Overall, 11 per cent of individuals, and 26 per cent of those pursuing NVQs independently, had received no advice or guidance, and a further 38 per cent described the advice and guidance received as ineffective. Nevertheless, the majority of individuals who had been given advice and guidance found what they received essential or very helpful. Advice and guidance is most likely to be provided by the parties close to delivery: employers and providers. While there are advantages to this arrangement, it is also evident that there are insufficient sources of impartial advice and guidance available to individuals, and that sources which do exist are not widely known. Among those who had received advice and guidance, 67 per cent of individuals had an individual interview and 57 per cent were provided with written information. Advice and guidance involved a Training Needs Analysis for 68 per cent of individuals and the identification of a suitable NVQ and level for 74 per cent. Initial and follow-up individual interviews were regarded as the most effective forms of advice and guidance. The most important substance of advice related to practical aspects of doing the NVQ, such as interpreting standards, preparing for assessment and developing portfolios.

Employers, providers and advisors should extend the provision of individual interviews to establish training needs and provide candidates with ongoing advice and guidance. In addition, independent advice and guidance centres which are accessible to individuals should be established and widely publicised. Regular advice and guidance should become an integral part of employer, provider and advisor NVQ activities. A wider support system should be established inside organizations implementing NVQs, with central advice and guidance, mentoring and support networks for individuals.

Barriers to individuals

The major barriers to individual take-up were perceived by all parties to be jargon and the amount of time and effort. The vast majority of individuals experienced no difficulty in accessing NVQ assessment. On-the-job (OTJ) assessment was reported by 50 per cent of employers and providers, and available for over 50 per cent of NVQ candidates overall but was unavailable to 67 per cent of those pursuing NVQs independently, the majority of whom would make use of it, if available. Accreditation of prior learning (APL) services were reported to be available by 50 per cent of employers and providers, and 47 per cent of NVQ candidates; 43 per cent of those for whom APL was unavailable would make use of them, if available. Of those individuals who paid some of the costs of their NVQs, 28 per cent were not made fully aware of all the costs beforehand, and 46 per cent of those who received financial support would have been deterred if they had to meet all the costs themselves. The majority of NVQ candidates (73 per cent) committed personal time towards the completion of their NVQ, and while for the majority this averaged 4-8 hours per week, 24 per cent of individuals spent in excess of 10 hours per week. About half the individuals were unaware of the extent of the personal time commitment beforehand.

It was recommended that OTJ assessment be made more widely available through promoting the training of workplace assessors and that APL services should be made more extensive through promoting the training of APL advisors and assessors. Assessment procedures should be simplified and the language of assessment made more accessible, and more support and guidance should be provided on assessment for candidates. Candidates should be given accurate estimates of all the costs of pursuing an NVQ, an opportunity to pay by instalments, and some guidance on the extent of personal time commitment required beforehand.

Employer, provider and advisor activity

Employers predominantly obtain information, advice and guidance from the TECs and private providers, while TECs, FE and private providers receive information and advice from NCVQ, lead bodies and awarding bodies. Adequate information had been received by 75 per cent of respondents on the key areas of the NVQ structure and implementation, but a smaller proportion commented on the inadequacy of information on the market value of NVQs and the time and effort involved. Specific guidance on practical implementation issues was valued more than advice or information, and 23 per cent of respondents were unable to recall any information, advice or guidance which had been particularly helpful. TEC staff play a pivotal role in providing information, advice and guidance on NVQs, with employers, providers and individuals, while guidance staff work almost exclusively with individuals. TEC staff, guidance personnel and FE Colleges provided advice on NVQs in general, whereas employers and private providers tended to focus on their specific provision.

Information supplied by NCVQ, lead bodies and awarding bodies to employers, providers and advisors should focus more on providing specific guidance on practical implementation issues. General information for individuals should emphasise the benefits of the practical, competence-based nature of NVQs and their status as national qualifications endorsed by employers. Advice and guidance services should be expanded, so that individuals can obtain advice which is independent of employers and providers. Employers and providers should focus on specific guidance activities associated with practical implementation matters, after individuals have been able to access independent advice and guidance. TECs should focus on providing information and advice to employers and providers, refer individuals to guidance services, and provide relevant training for guidance staff.

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Coming of age: philosophical perspectives on education and training in later life

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Introduction

Although any international compilations of demographic data need to be treaded with some caution, particularly in view of the political changes in Europe in recent years, it is apparent that one significant feature of today's industrialised societies is the relatively high proportion of older people in their populations. Demographers can demonstrate that this is mainly the result of past downturns in fertility rates and, more recently, falls in death rates at older ages. Within the United Kingdom, statistical evidence suggests that by the year 2021 over 18 per cent of the population will be over 65 years of age, compared with less than 16 per cent in 1991 and a mere 11 per cent in 1951. In 1991, there were 10.6 million people of pensionable age, a rise of 16 per cent since 1971. By 2031, the numbers are predicted to rise by a further 38 per cent to 14.6 million (Central Statistical Office, 1995). However, we cannot know at present what changes in lifestyles or in the environment will occur in the next century and whether there will be any effect on mortality rates.

1993 was designated European Year of Older People and Solidarity Between Generations. Within the European Union, there has been an increasing focus on social provision for older people in a range of fields, including leisure and education, across the member states. In the United Kingdom, the Carnegie UK Trust has undertaken a substantial inquiry into the situation of older people in order to draw attention to some of the relevant issues, to stimulate debate and to bring about a change in public attitudes towards those in the Third Age (i.e. aged 50-74 years). One of the priority areas for the inquiry was an examination of older people's learning, educational and training activities, a field which has come to be known as educational gerontology (Carnegie UK Trust, 1993). Certainly, over the last two decades, there has been a steady growth of interest in the role of education and learning in later life in Europe, in the USA and, to some extent, in Australasia. What is apparent, however, is that, until recently, practice had tended to develop on the basis of anecdotal evidence without reference to any kind of philosophical discussion about the aims and purposes of education for older adults. We are now beginning to witness the birth of an emerging debate concerning the philosophical basis for the development of educational gerontology as a field of research and practice in the UK. The aim of this paper is therefore to reflect critically on two particular issues which have engaged the attention of both practitioners and academics with an interest in gerontology. Firstly, how can we define 'older adults'? Secondly, what can current philosophical perspectives offer to those engaged in the practice of educational gerontology?

Defining Older Adults

In examining the variety of attempts to categorise 'older adults', 'older people', 'senior citizens', 'the elderly', 'old age', 'later life' which have been used in different contexts at different times, it is noticeable that chronological age is often favoured as a method of differentiating phases of the life cycle. Thus, in the UK, statutory retirement age marks the beginning of life as an 'elderly' person. The statistics quoted earlier illustrate this kind of approach. Nevertheless, Young and Schuller (1991) argue persuasively against the adoption of such a practice on grounds of its restrictive nature and its contribution to structural dependency.

Currently, it is fashionable to adopt a social life cycle perspective in which the lifespan is viewed as a fourfold division. The First Age is seen as a period of childhood and socialisation; the Second Age is that of raising a family and work; the Third Age, as identified in the Carnegie Inquiry is that period of active independence in the post-work phase; and the Fourth Age is seen as one of dependence and decline, although Midwinter (1993) notes that older people may gravitate between the Third and Fourth Ages, according to their circumstances. It is also noticeable that a number of those who would term themselves second-wave feminists have chosen to confront their own ageing in terms of 'ages' and 'stages' of life (e.g. Greer, 1991; Goldsworthy, 1993; Rountree, 1993; Jong, 1994).

It can be argued that these divisions of the older population into necessarily artificial categories are inappropriate since, for many individuals, the transitions from one phase to another are not easily recognisable; people enter and leave different stages of the life cycle at different ages. Neither should extreme old age necessarily be equated with inevitable decline and decrepitude. Such divisions perpetuate the kind of structural ageism and age stereotyping which those who work with older people - and doubtless, older people themselves - would be anxious to dispel. In fact, Bytheway (1995) argues forcefully for the need to counter ageism by beginning to think in ways which would enable us to see ourselves within a broader temporal context and to abandon the 'them' and 'us' mentality which sets older people apart from the rest of the population.

In discussing older adults - or 'later life' - in this context, then, it may be more relevant to refer to people who, whatever their chronological age, are 'post-work' in the sense that they are no longer primarily involved in earning a living or with major responsibilities for raising a family. This does not, of course, preclude the fact that such people may be seeking some kind of part-time paid employment and/or be involved in a caring role in some capacity. Nor does it preclude the view that the notion of 'work' is a dynamic one in our present society. With radical change in employment patterns now a reality, analyses of who is 'post-work' will, of course, be subject to continual re-definition.

Education and Training in Later Life

It follows that we also need some parameters for the concepts of education and training in this context. There is evidence that older people in the post-work phase may take part in a whole range of activities which offer opportunities for acquiring new knowledge, practising new skills or re-evaluating attitudes and ideas. Some of these may be recognised as belonging under the general umbrella of formal adult education provision and are for all adults. Other activities do not necessarily have 'education' as their prime focus, yet may provide learning opportunities and specific training in a range of skills. For example, the Greater London Forum for the Elderly runs a training programme for members of the management committees of local forums or for those contemplating making a contribution to the work of representing pensioners' interests at local level. But it must also be acknowledged that learning can take place in a variety of everyday contexts. Thus, in discussing education and training in later life, the emphasis here is on organised activity where the main focus is specifically older people's learning, not necessarily under the aegis of formally organised educational provision.

Philosophical Perspectives

Early philosophies of educational gerontology were based very much on the kind of arguments which have been put forward to justify widening adult access to education in general. Such arguments relate mainly to concepts of equity and social justice. However, a range of other positions have been analysed by Withnall and Percy (1994). These include a closely-argued radical advocacy of the need for a paradigm shift towards 'critical educational gerontology' which could question conventional wisdom about the nature and purpose of education in later life and would use educational gerontology as a means of raising people's consciousness about the rights of older people and the effective role which they could play in society (Glendenning and Battersby, 1990). Percy himself originally challenged this approach and offered a liberal humanist perspective in which older people would be valued for the skill and wisdom accumulated throughout life which could usefully be passed through the generations (Percy, 1990). Alternatively, the contribution of developmental psychology has been to suggest that the task for older people is to use their learning to transcend the past and previous social roles in order to let them go and to accept that human life is finite (Moody, 1990). The American feminist Betty Friedan describes her own journey to this point when she 'put the missing pieces together' and confronted her own age, concluding, "I have never felt so free." (Friedan, 1993).

More general approaches have sought to locate the debate within the context of adult learning, particularly the currently popular notion of a learning society in which learning and educational achievement are valued and through which it might be possible to build a more tolerant society, committed to active citizenship and a more fully-developed democracy (NIACE, 1993). Within this learning society, all members of the population would be equipped with a range of broad-based generic skills to enable them to continue learning as and when they choose. Finger (1990) takes a more sweeping view of adult learning in post-industrial society. He believes that adult learning changes its function and meaning; it moves away from a passive role of helping people adapt to and cope with change towards a new function where participants acknowledge that conventional problem-solving mechanisms have failed. They then try to 'learn their way out' of a perceived crisis situation in a collective search for meaning to make sense of a material environment that threatens social disintegration. Among older adults, examples of this active and creative collective learning response can be seen in the work of some of the older women's groups such as the Older Feminists' Network and the Global Link for Older and Mid-Life Women.

Discussion

Whichever perspective is adopted, it has to be acknowledged that the post-work population of the UK is not a homogeneous entity which can be readily identified as the object of targeted educational provision. Rather, it consists of a range of diverse groupings which may have both common and discrete characteristics. As such, it is constantly changing and developing. Succeeding generations will age with different life experiences and within different socio-economic contexts. Life expectancy is increasing; any theoretical perspective on the purposes of education and training in later life will have to take into account those who are frail, institutionalised or without family support.

Those who have contributed to what may be termed the philosophical debate on the education and training of older adults have also assumed that later life should not be dismissed as a period of decline, uselessness and dependence; and that educators should build upon the positive attributes of older adults, such as their wisdom and experience. Points of difference appear to relate to more generalised issues: for example, whether or not educational gerontology should primarily be concerned with a commitment to empower older adults in a society which subjects them to structural ageism and a 'deficit' model of their learning abilities. Do teaching and learning methods for older adults therefore need to be reconsidered? Should the philosophical basis for educational gerontology be drawn solely from considerations relating to later life and the situation of older adults in contemporary society - or rather, from the principles which apply to adults of all ages underlying concepts of lifelong learning?

In discussing these issues, Withnall and Percy (1994) choose to emphasise the continuity between early, middle and older adult life and suggest that the aims and purposes of education and training in later life are not distinct from those applicable to younger age groups. However, they discern a particular threat facing older learners - that of the stereotyping in society of older adults as passive, non-productive, intellectually declining and generally not worth educational investment. They point out that many older adults doubtless take on the values and meanings provided by society and internalise these external stereotypes about themselves which then become reality. The crisis out of which older adults need to learn their way in order to achieve the aims of lifelong learning, is one for which many of them will have inadequate preparation and which they will scarcely perceive. The threat with which educational gerontologists must deal lies within older adults as well as around them - negative stereotypes of the educability of older adults.

Withnall and Percy go on to argue at length that these threats can be confronted both in the nature of educational provision and in the teaching and learning processes in which older adults are involved. They draw on their own research undertaken with groups of older learners in a range of formal and informal settings to suggests that it is the tendency for self-help and mutual support among older learners and the potential for making use of the experience which older learners bring with them which offer opportunities both for the provision of learning activities and for the development of appropriate pedagogical approaches.

The Future

Gerontologists such as Bond and Coleman (1993) have tried to identify some aspects of change which are likely to affect older people's lives into the next century. These include social changes in work and leisure patterns, in family life and social networks and technological change. We may also see political changes resulting in new developments both in social policy for older people and in increasing opportunities for learning throughout life. Whilst there is an obvious need in the light of these potential developments for continuing debate and dialogue about the meaning of education and training in the lives of older people, it is also important that we come to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate a new image of the post-work period and the processes of ageing. For these reasons, variety, experiment and inquiry should not be stifled by any one dominant paradigm in a fast-moving society.

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